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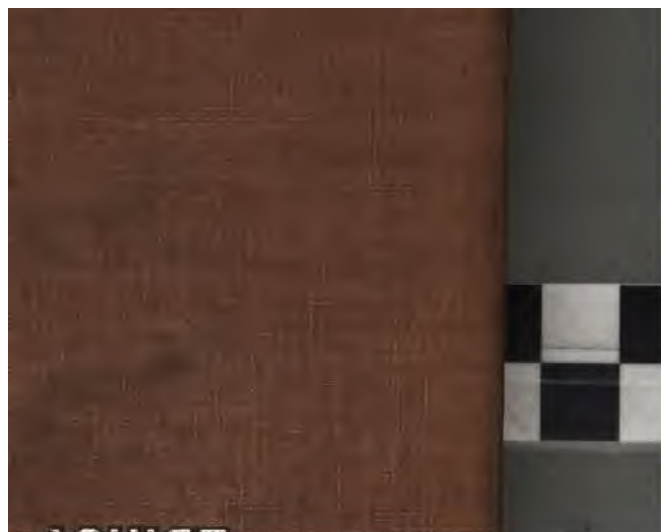
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ROMANCE OF GRAYLOCK MANOR



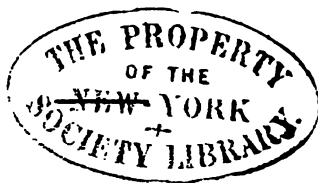
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ROMANCE OF GRAYLOCK MANOR

BY

LOUISE F. P. HAMILTON

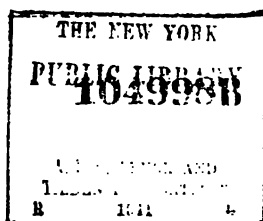
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CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:
RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS.

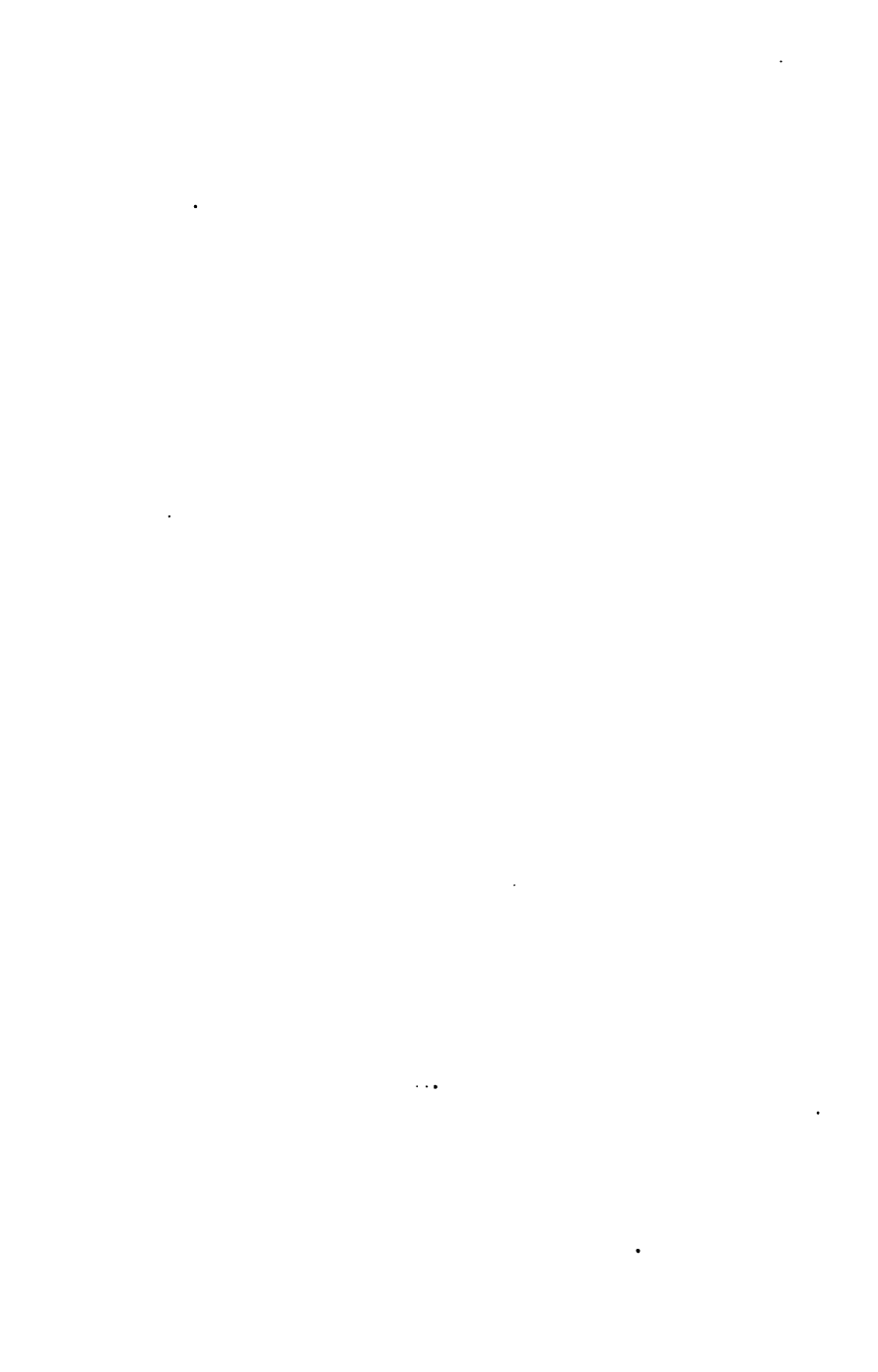
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DEDICATED TO MY HUSBAND
MAJ. GEN. SCHUYLER HAMILTON



IN MEMORIAM
OF
LOUISE FRANCES PAINE HAMILTON
AUTHORESS OF
THE ROMANCE OF GRAYLOCK MANOR
BY HER HUSBAND
SCHUYLER HAMILTON
MAJ.-GEN. VOLS., U. S. A.
JANUARY 31, 1898

Romance of Graylock Manor

CHAPTER I.

THE HOME OF THE PENHALLOWS.

In a quaint old town on the coast of New Hampshire, rich in historical lore of revolutionary folk and times, and one of the earliest settlements of the Pilgrim Fathers—now many years ago—there lived a family by the name of Penhallow.

At the date of my story, the old family mansion (which had been the home for more than one generation of the heroes of those early times) had

seen its best days, and was fast falling into decay, though an air of its former grandeur still hung about it.

Of the old Colonial style of architecture, with its broad piazza and massive columns, it yet contrasted not altogether unfavorably with its more modern and more pretentious neighbors.

Possessing all the stern pride of their Puritan ancestry, the Penhallows were not of the sort, however, to succumb to the reverses of the fickle Dame Fortune, and bade a bold defiance to the inroads which time, wind, and weather were evidently intent upon making on their ancestral estates.

Socially, they still held their places as leaders; and their entertainments, if not as grand as those of former years, were still very gracious. And the innate gentleness and kindness

which characterized their intercourse with their neighbors caused them to be universally beloved and respected.

The heads of the family were a type of the old school gentlefolk of that day, characterized by a stern sort of courteousness, mingled with a pride as impregnable as the granite rocks of their native state. But withal, they were pure and simple in their tastes and habits of life. And they were of a class to which it was no credit to be honest; for, unlike the man who could but wouldn't, they simply didn't know how to be otherwise.

Two charming daughters, and two stalwart, manly sons, blessed their union.

The eldest son, John Penhallow, had recently been married, and was now established in a distant town in the practice of his profession as a lawyer.

The other and younger, whose name was Nicholas, was a student at Exeter Academy, and was now at home on his vacation.

Entering with a bound the morning-room, where the family were sitting, and flinging his cap up to the ceiling and catching it again, the young gentleman exclaimed sarcastically:

"This seems to be a nice picnic for a fellow who has to go back to school to-morrow, to study for three mortal months. Why are you all so solemn on this occasion? Dare I flatter myself it is on my account?"

"Not a bit of it, Nick," replied Elizabeth. "Though, indeed, brother mine, if you will condescend to suggest what would be most agreeable to your lordship, we will entertain you to the top of your bent to-day, since you are not to bother us again for at least three

months. How do you manage to keep out of mischief so long, Nick?"

A game of battledore and shuttlecock being proposed, the girls were quite willing to exchange their books for the recreation, which in those days was what lawn tennis is to the present time, a less athletic, though a far more graceful game. So they merrily set about their play.

The gentle mother looked up occasionally from her sewing and enjoyed the sport equally with her children. Later, however, their father's entrance was the signal for a suspension of the game, and the youngster's signal for a retreat.

The paternal dignity cast a damper upon their amusement, and "spoiled all the fun," as the youngster declared.

Picking up his cap and turning to leave the room in a high state of dis-

gust at the interruption of the game, he inquired: "May I ask who is going to drive me over to school to-morrow? Don't all speak at once!"

Elizabeth replied, sotto voce, "I will, Nick, if you will take Katherine and me to see the fortune teller you told us about."

Agreeing to this, the matter was thereupon settled, and the next morning, bright and early, they started on their "winding way."

CHAPTER II.

THE FORTUNE TELLER.

A description of the two girls may not be uninteresting here. The elder (whose name was Elizabeth) was a stately beauty, vivacious, glowing with health and fine spirits. A brunette of a pronounced type, with lustrous black hair and saucy eyes of the same color, possessing a clear olive complexion, pouting red lips, and a tall, statuesque figure of perfect symmetry.

The younger sister, Katherine, was of medium stature, delicate and fragile, with eyes of heavenly blue, wavy brown hair, and graceful as a swaying willow. About her was an air of dreamy lan-

guor, which was indicative of delicate health, rather than habitual melancholy.

The girls, accustomed to drive by themselves through the romantic and beautiful scenery of this section, and glad, also, to oblige their dashing young brother, whom they dearly loved, were up betimes next morning, and ready for the journey.

What a lark it would be to have their fortunes told!

And even Nick had declared that the woman was a veritable witch!

All the girls in Exeter confirmed the student's opinion about it, too.

So celebrated was she that many curious people came from miles away to have their fortunes told.

A modern Witch of Endor in local renown, was the famous country sibyl.

Elizabeth, then engaged to a young

army officer, was confidently looking forward to a golden future!

But it would be so nice to be told all about it, and to hear that all her own happy anticipations were to be confirmed by the Fates.

The morning was bright, clear and crisp. Of course there were parting kisses and the usual family good-byes to be gotten over, and many mysterious little packages to be stowed away, which a mother's fond love had provided for her darling boy going out from under the parental roof to the colorless student life.

Everything settled, they gayly set forth, the girls in high anticipations of having their fortunes told, and a lingering regret in the young man at leaving home.

This picturesque section of New England was now gleaming in its au-

tumna! glory of gorgeously tinted foliage, shaded by the somber pines and sturdy fir trees, whose resinous odors, floating in the bright sunshine, filled all the crystalline air with balm.

This magic philtre imparted a tonic exhilarating as "wine on the lees" to the rising spirits of our young friends; excepting, perhaps, Katherine, who appeared to be fading away like a sweet lily touched by an untimely frost, and who seemed rather to be absorbed in contemplation of the beautiful panorama through which they were passing than listening to or participating in the merry chatter of her brother and sister.

As reaction naturally follows the too effervescent gayety of even the high spirits of youth, so, a brooding silence gradually crept over the little party.

Nicholas drove along whistling softly (an accompaniment to his thoughts, I presume) until, striking upon a familiar air, both the girls joined in, singing the words of the song.

Elizabeth's voice was a rich contralto; while Katherine's soprano was of an indescribable flexibility and sweetness, some of whose notes might have beguiled the very birds.

So, gayly singing and chatting, the morning flew by until, upon coming in sight of the town, Nicholas exclaimed: "Here we are, girls, in plain sight of the fortune teller's house, and as I am acquainted with every one in this section I will stay behind, while you girls go ahead and interview the old woman; for I would never hear the last of it if any of the Academy boys and girls knew that I went there."

And so, suiting the action to the word, he alighted from the carriage, after pointing out the wayside hut where lived the gipsy sibyl.

Immediately realizing that they were now without male protection, there was a moment of hesitation on the part of the young ladies, Katherine timidly protesting, and declaring that she was frightened nearly out of her senses; while Elizabeth (though secretly sharing her sister's alarm) was nevertheless determined not to forego the consummation of the morning's adventure, of which this consultation was — to her — the great objective point.

And, then, reassuring her sister, with a light laugh, she reined her horse up to the door, and hitching the animal to a small tree they timidly entered the hut, which con-

sisted of but one room; in one corner sat a weird looking specimen of femininity, swaying herself backward and forward, and crooning some incantation, intelligible only to herself.

Doubtless, seeing the approach of strangers, this was done for effect; so, at least, thought Miss Elizabeth, and immediately thereupon regaining her usual composure, she began to laugh merrily, the ridiculousness of the whole situation overcoming her prudence.

The sullen old hag at once took offense at this demonstration and immediately flew into a senseless rage.

Unwilling, however, to lose her fee, her anger was suppressed for the moment, but she had a grudge to settle, and taking the extended hand of

Elizabeth, she critically scanned its lines, and then with a fiendish chuckle of exultation, flung it rudely away, merely saying:

"You are ambitious, Miss, and you are in love, but you will be disappointed, and there are bitter tears in store for you yet, my fine lady."

And then, as if there were darker secrets which she did not wish to tell, she turned abruptly to Katherine, coaxingly saying:

"Let me now look for you, my pretty one. I see something better written in your face."

But Katherine declared that she did not wish to have her fortune told.

However, upon being urged, she thought it expedient to humor her witchship, as she felt a rather super-

stitious fear of offending her any farther.

And so, lightly taking and examining the reluctantly extended palm, the fortune teller exclaimed gayly:

"Aha! little one, you are to wed speedily; you are going on an unexpected journey; and you will meet the man who is to be your husband before you reach your journey's end."

This settled it, in the minds of the girls. The last story seemed as palpably absurd as the first was impossible.

The peerless Elizabeth wear the willow, indeed!

And scarcely less absurd was the idea that Katherine, a mere child, comparatively, and still in school, would be married for years to come; for, being the youngest of the family, she was literally the baby.

And so, gladly turning away, they resumed their journey homeward, though it must be owned that forebodings which she would have been ashamed to acknowledge, weighed upon the spirits of the queenly Elizabeth.

On arriving home, to their surprise they found that their elder brother, John Penhallow, who resided in a distant town, had come for a brief visit to his parents, and finding the family much concerned about Katherine's health, he affectionately insisted on taking her home with him, declaring that a change of scene was all the remedy she required.

And thereupon it was decided in council that she should return with him, where John and his young wife would so divert her mind that she

would forget that there was anything the matter with her.

The distance, being only about twenty miles, was soon traveled.

But I am moving on ahead of my story, or rather of a most interesting incident of the day's journey.

CHAPTER III.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

Passing through the town of Somerset, it occurred to John Penhallow that he had a little matter of business with General Albon, and accordingly he stopped at the residence of that gentleman.

But, finding that his horses were restive and unwilling to stand, he decided to defer his errand until some future time, and was about turning away when young Major Albon came out of the house, and perceiving the situation, politely offered to hold the horses.

Of course an introduction to Miss Katherine duly followed; and here

let me introduce Ernest Albon, a strikingly handsome young man, with the stamp of nobility on every feature.

He was the petted and idolized son,—the pride of his aristocratic old father's heart. The father was General of the State Militia, which at that period was an institution of very considerable importance in New England. This, his favorite son and aid-de - camp, was distinguished for his manly beauty, his fine military bearing, and incomparable horsemanship.

I once heard an old gentleman, who had seen him on occasions of general muster, say that he had traveled all over the civilized world without ever having seen young Albon's equal in personal appearance and military bearing.

Katherine's delicate beauty at once attracted and fascinated him.

It was love at first sight; and he made up his mind then and there to cultivate her acquaintance, and if possible to win her love.

At an early day thereafter, he called upon her, and became more fascinated with each visit, and subsequently learning from her brother that he might do so, formally asked for permission to address her as a suitor.

This so frightened the timid Katherine that she refused to grant him a private interview, and when a tender missive, her first love letter, subsequently came to hand, concealing her real pleasure, she capriciously declared she thought it horrid in him to pursue her thus.

Not hearing from or seeing him

again for several days, however, she became anxious at heart, and her pale, troubled face betrayed her emotions to her watchful brother, who secretly rejoiced at her discomposure, for the young man was a suitor such as he would have chosen for her.

And when her lover next met her the tell-tale blushes gave the encouragement he longed to receive; and when, subsequently, he asked her to be his "wee wifie," she did not say him nay.

To cut a long story short, the gipsy sibyl's strange prediction was fulfilled, and, ere a twelvemonth had elapsed, Katherine Penhallow and Ernest Albon were man and wife.

Both were young and gifted, and having an ample share of this world's goods, life opened up to them a vista of rare and radiant promise,

all aglow with love's young dream. In the bright morning of their career even the traditional cloud the size of a man's hand was nowhere to be seen.

Elizabeth's lover, meanwhile, had been ordered with his company to the frontier to aid in quelling an Indian outbreak.

At first his letters came regularly; and it seemed that while fighting would certainly take place, the campaign would be quick, sharp and decisive.

But the marauding Indians, by later reports, were growing more and more aggressive, and they had been so reinforced by other unruly tribes that the beleaguered garrison now barely held its own, and fears were hourly entertained of an attack in force by the swarming red-skins.

Then weeks and months elapsed and no news came to cheer her.

- Finally it was known that there had been a desperate fight. The fort had been stormed and many of our men had been killed and wounded.

Elizabeth, though beside herself with anxiety, still clung to the forlorn hope that her lover had escaped. It must be so. She could not have it otherwise.

But as time wore on and no word came, she grew hollow-eyed, and a settled melancholy hung gloomily over her life.

Had the old witch's malediction come to pass?

CHAPTER IV.

KATHERINE'S NEW HOME.

Ernest Albon was instinctively an artist, and the pretty cottage, to which he brought his young wife on a bright September day, was one in which all the poetry of his romantic nature had found a visible expression.

Sweet Briar Cottage had been beautified by its picturesque accessories and charming surroundings.

Climbing roses, jasmine and honeysuckles shaded the broad piazza, and on the lawn and along the graveled walks shrubs and flowers had been planted and tended by loving hands, and as they were expected to do,

smiled a welcome to Katherine Albon as she entered her new domain.

It was a happy home-coming, in the twilight of their wedding day.

Her brother, John Penhallow, and his young wife (who were now to be their neighbors) were there to welcome them, and when they all sat down to a tempting repast of delicious viands, the bride and bridegroom doing the honors, they formed an ideal picture of domestic happiness.

Whole pages might be written on the weeks and months that followed, telling how the young husband would find excuses a dozen times a day for leaving his office and running over to his house just for a moment, —really to snatch a kiss or obtain a caress from his young wife; and how Katherine grew more and more

charming in the assumption of her matronly duties; and how the cook, a staid and sober woman, often had to turn her face away to laugh at the orders given by the young and inexperienced bride, in her zeal in the preparation of some favorite dish for her husband.

The cook knew full well that if her instructions were followed there would soon be an end of her service and a vacancy in the cooking department of Sweet Briar Cottage.

So she good-naturedly humored her young mistress, and took her own way, with the happy result of giving perfect satisfaction.

And one might tell how, some time later on, when Ernest entered the room suddenly, Katherine with a startled look on her face, and blushing deeply, would hide the

dainty, tiny garment on which she was sewing, while her husband proudly but covertly smiled at her fancied disguise.

CHAPTER V.

A BLUE-EYED BABY GIRL.

One happy year has rolled by, with its panorama of ever varying lights and shadows, and a pall has suddenly settled down upon Sweet Briar Cottage, the home of Ernest and Katherine Albon.

The doctor's gig stands at the gate. Anxious faces occasionally peer out through half-closed blinds into the street, and Ernest Albon wanders alone, distractedly pacing up and down the graveled walk.

All the surroundings indicate the agony of suspense that pervades the atmosphere of the cottage.

A precious life is hanging by a slender thread.

The Death Angel seems already to be hovering over the couch where Katherine is struggling for her life, when suddenly the street-door is opened and the anxious doctor, emerging, grasps Ernest warmly by the hand, and then, in a low whisper, informs him that a fine little daughter has been born to him.

Ernest Albion uttered a fervent "Thank God!" imagining that all would now be well.

But it was evident that the doctor still entertained grave fears for Katherine, as he quietly but firmly restrained the young husband from rushing to his wife's side.

Days and weeks slowly passed, and everything that affection and skill could suggest had been done, and yet Katherine's life hung in the wavering balance.

Days and weeks of inexpressible anxiety they were to her loving husband.

Finally a decided change for the better came to relieve the loving circle; and when at last the young mother had so far recovered as to sit up and hold in her arms the blue-eyed baby girl whose advent had been so fondly anticipated, and who had come to perfect the beautiful tie of happy wedlock, Ernest Albon's gratitude was beyond expression, and his idolized wife could have asked anything within his power and it would have been gladly granted her, to whom he was indebted for all that was most sacred in his life.

The charmed circle was now complete;—husband, wife and child. His home was to him a heaven on earth and he would not have exchanged

it for a monarch's throne. Prouder husband and father there was not in all the broad land of America.

Katherine's beauty was enhanced an hundredfold; and it seemed that no such baby had ever lived, at least in his eyes,—fond, foolish fellow! For, to tell the truth, it was just a plain little thing, but, as of old, "love flings a halo round the dear one's head."

And the little one, growing day by day in strength and intelligence, became more and more wonderful in her fond father's estimation, and when at the age of twelve months she could not only walk, but essayed to run away, his fatherly delight knew no bounds in letting her get a good start, and then pretending to try to catch her. How the little feet would patter as the consciousness

of pursuit dawned upon her infant mind!

The goal being her grandparent's house (a block away), she was always allowed to reach the gate before being captured.

And then the frolic that ensued; such scampering and shouting, until finally, seated on her father's shoulder, she was borne in triumph away.

CHAPTER VI.

SAD CHANGES.

Why was it that the warm, rich nature of Ernest Albon went out in such idolatrous devotion to this little child?

Had he discovered that Katherine's nature was almost entirely devoid of the maternal instinct? Feeling, perhaps, that her woman's kingdom had been invaded, and that a rival had appeared upon the throne where she had reigned supreme?

Be this as it may, the little Lucile was never allowed to miss the brooding love so necessary to her quick, sensitive nature, till one sad day when the news flew around the vil-

lage, striking every one with dismay, —Ernest Albon was dead! Like a flash from a clear and cloudless sky, giving no warning, the grim messenger came and went, leaving desolation in his track.

Being an expert horseman fear was unknown to him, and he had great delight in riding the most spirited and, to others, unmanageable horses.

He had, on this morning, as was his frequent custom, taken his little daughter on before him and gone for a gallop into the country.

The horse was one which he had but recently purchased, a beauty, as he proudly declared. And if it was a bit vicious, what did it matter to him? He had never encountered any animal that he could not manage.

Snuffing the fresh morning air, the beast started off at a lively pace,

cantering and dancing, to the infinite delight of the child, who clapped her tiny hands and shouted with the excitement.

Major Albon gave the animal its head for a time, until he discovered that the creature was trying to throw him.

Then was brought into play all his skill in horsemanship, and had it not been for the encumbrance of the child, which left him only one hand to hold the vicious beast with, he would have undoubtedly come off victorious.

Wheeling suddenly, the beast, now beyond control, started on a run, apparently for his stable. But by a superhuman effort this was prevented, the only thing left to do being to keep him in the road until compelled to stop from sheer exhaustion.

Katherine saw them dash past, and

covered her eyes with her hands, in horror.

Ernest's hat had fallen off, and his hair was blown in wild disorder, and with the pallor of death on his face, holding the child closely to his breast—she was even then laughing in her innocent glee—he cast one never-to-be-forgotten, agonized look at his wife as they dashed madly by.

Still further infuriated at not being able to gain his stable, the animal reared and plunged, and then with a sudden spring forward threw his burden to the ground, fatally injuring the young husband and father. The child was picked up some little distance from him, unharmed.

It was a sad, strange providence, the very irony of fate.

This grand young life, so necessary to his helpless little family, was crushed

out in the very morning of his noble young manhood; a life, too, that gave such rare promise of usefulness in the future.

Katherine succumbed entirely to this sudden shock and, locked in her darkened apartments, secluded herself from every one. And poor little baby Lucile was left to wander neglected about the desolate house, and wonder why her papa did not come home!

On account of Katherine's delicate health, Ernest Albon had been both father and mother to the little one, and the last words lingering on his dying lips were a prayer for his fatherless child.

The usual disorganization of business affairs in such cases of sudden bereavement followed, and when, at length, the husband's business matters were all settled up, and it was found

there would be comparatively little property left, Katherine's parents affectionately proposing that she should return to them, the pretty cottage was closed, and with her fatherless babe, she went out forever from its loving shelter.

CHAPTER VII.

LUCILE STARTS ON A JOURNEY.

Twelve years have passed, and we find Lucile now a tall girl, ready to start upon a long journey.

Her uncle Nicholas (who was her guardian), now a resident of a distant city and a prosperous lawyer, had invited her to live with him and attend a fashionable seminary for young ladies, studying with his only daughter, of about the same age.

The bright anticipations of the fatherless girl could hardly be imagined, as she was starting from her not too happy home, for her mother had married again.

It was arranged that Lucile was to

be chaperoned by a lady friend of her uncle's family, then on a visit to Boston, and when, on arriving at that city, the young girl learned that they would be delayed for a day or two before starting, her disappointment knew no bounds, so anxious was she to reach the new home, which her vivid imagination had pictured as being little short of a modern Paradise.

And the dear relatives whom she so longed to see, who must be even now looking anxiously for her arrival—how could she wait another day before starting?

And when at last they were off, how slowly they seemed to travel!

The hours dragged along like weary days. Finally the journey was ended, after many a pleasant little episode, to be ever after remembered. For when traveling in those olden days of canal

packets and stage coaches, people easily became social, and lasting friendships were often formed.

Among the many incidents of the journey was one of a serio-comic character, which was ever after associated with the "raging canal."

Arriving late at night at the terminus of the railroad, the canal packet which was supposed to connect with the train from Boston had not yet arrived, and when, after tedious hours of waiting, it did arrive it was so crowded there was but little room left for the belated passengers.

But as there was no alternative except to spend the remainder of the night in the depot or in the street, amid great dissatisfaction and very general grumbling, there was a scramble for such accommodations as the packet afforded.

The consequence was that many of the passengers could not obtain sleeping berths at all.

Lucile's chaperon, however, being one of the lucky ones, through her intercession Lucile was assigned to an upper berth, and mattresses were spread on the floor for the benefit of any who chose to avail themselves of the privilege.

And the tired travelers, among whom were many women and children, were only too glad to accept anything that offered an opportunity to obtain a few hours of rest and sleep.

Owing to its over-crowded condition, the boat settled so much in the night that water came in, and some one, making the discovery, excitedly shouted out: "The boat has sprung a leak and is sinking!"

Just then the packet, entering a

lock, gave a sudden lurch, and bumping violently against the side of the lock, the startled passengers, thus suddenly aroused from their slumbers, were instantly in a state of panic.

Lucile, who had never even seen a canal before, and now but half-awake, imagining herself about to be shipwrecked and in imminent danger of her life, sprang from her berth, and alighted on the prostrate forms of those who were lying on the floor beneath.

Of course general consternation prevailed. Some cried fire! some, murder! some prayed and some—swore—all imagining that a terrible catastrophe had occurred.

In the general uproar and confusion Lucile made her way to the deck of the boat, where she remained the rest of the night, feeling ever afterwards

that she had no further use for an upper sleeping berth.

As day was now breaking and she could see land was so close that one could almost step from the boat to it, she soon regained her composure, and meeting a young girl of about her own age, who, it appeared, like herself, was on her way to a young ladies' boarding school, they immediately struck up an acquaintance—after the fashion of school girls.

The rest of the journey the two girls were inseparable, and when they parted it was with promises to correspond and never, never to forget each other.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ORPHAN DESOLÉE.

Arriving at the city of —, Lucile's tedious journey was at last ended.

She was so glad! and while her chaperon went to look after the baggage, she became interested in watching the crowd, as one after another rushed forward and affectionately greeted friends.

While beginning to feel desolée, and wondering what could have occurred to prevent her friends from being there to greet her, a small boy with a basket of delicious looking peaches accosted her.

"Have a peach, miss? Only one cent." "

Lucile looked longingly at the luscious fruit, but recollecting that she had nothing less than a one-dollar bill, shook her head.

But the young rascal, noticing her hesitation, pursued her until she was compelled to tell him she had no change.

"Oh!" said he, "that don't make no diffence; take as many peaches as you wish and I'll get your bill changed in a minute."

Lucile thanked him and took half a dozen peaches, handing him a dollar bill, with which the youngster departed around the corner to return no more. This was her initial experience in the wicked ways of a big city.

Lucile and her chaperon were now driven at once to the residence of Colonel Penhallow.

The carriage drove into a beautiful

park, and stopping in front of a stately mansion the coachman opened the door, and with a palpitating heart Lucile sprang out and ascending the marble steps rang the door bell, which was answered by a liveried servant who condescendingly informed her that the family were all out excepting madam, who was taking her afternoon nap and could not be disturbed.

It was indeed a rude awakening from her anticipations of welcome.

"But," said Lucile, "I am her niece, and have come a long journey! Show me to my aunt's room at once."

"Oh!" said the lackey, "I will show you to your own room; and I will tell madam that you have arrived as soon as it is possible for me to do so."

A chill settled upon the timid child's tender heart.

So Lucile was shown by the servant

to the apartment which had been arranged for her.

It was a very pretty room, with a lovely view of the spacious grounds, which she would have been charmed with, as with all her new surroundings, but for the coldness of her uncongenial reception, so different from her own fond anticipations of loving relatives.

In that lonely moment she wished herself back in her own New England home, where, though comparatively plain were the surroundings, every one would have given her a hearty welcome.

The minutes of waiting seemed hours to the young traveler, and, no one coming to meet her, she sat down at last on her trunk and burst into a passion of bitter tears.

Not hearing or heeding the silent

entrance of her fashionable aunt, she was dismayed by her sudden appearance and the expression on her face, which was strikingly hard and cold.

A single critical glance at the poor child's travel-stained condition, her little pathetic face with its painfully drawn lines, her eyes and nose red and swollen from uncontrolled weeping, made an altogether unprepossessing impression on her new relative.

A sense of duty, however, impelled the grand dame to take the child's hand and to attempt to soothe her; but finding all her perfunctory efforts ineffectual, and judging that the child was worn out with her journey and needed rest, she unhesitatingly consigned her to the ministrations of a maid, and then at once left the room, feeling that she had done her whole duty. Thoroughly vexed at the idea

that she was going to have a troublesome charge on her hands, she retired to meet her husband and impart to him her first disagreeable impressions, which, however, she utterly failed in doing, her prejudice and evident injustice only creating a secret sympathy in the heart of the colonel for the poor little girl, a stranger in a strange land.

And when, next morning, Lucile made her appearance after a refreshing sleep, her uncle's cordial welcome brought back the happy smiles to her face, and she knew instinctively that thenceforth she would have one friend, even in that strangely repellent atmosphere.

Mrs. Penhallow was a fashionable society lady, and though possessing great personal beauty and brilliancy, was selfish and narrow at heart,—a

butterfly—and—a fashionable “social leader.”

She had an only daughter whom she intended to “bring out” socially when the proper time came, in such a skillful way as would insure her a brilliant marriage.

Lucile soon learned she would have a continued struggle, with the odds against her, but secretly vowed that she would be discreet, and bide her time, aware that she could safely depend on the colonel’s kindly protection.

She could not continue to live in the family long and not know that her loving uncle had much to contend against in his own household, and she determined, by her sympathy and silence, to comfort him, when it was in her power.

Thus, having a common cause, there was a strong bond between them.

Her cousin Maud, who was a beauty, and really kindly disposed at heart, was nevertheless quite willing to contrast her own dainty city garments with the stranger's wardrobe of country make; apparently enjoying her advantage, especially as she could see that the lonely Lucile was super-sensitive about it, and keenly felt the difference in their outer appearance.

Her warm-hearted uncle, perceiving this cruel situation, did all in his power to remedy it, by a lavish supply of his own funds.

It was the action of a generous heart. But the purchases were entrusted to his wife's supervision, who, having taken a dislike to the orphan, had secretly determined to accentuate her disadvantages in every possible way.

It was a most trying position; but being naturally quick to perceive, and by inheritance really artistic in her tastes, the quick-eyed Lucile readily "caught on" to the prevailing modes; she had a tactful way of adjusting herself to the situation, no matter how incongruous.

She spent many an hour when the others of the family were asleep in secretly remodeling her ill-fitting garments, and touching up their too somber effects with a bit of bright color, or softening down some glaring hues with a bit of lace.

In thus producing a harmonious appearance without openly antagonizing her watchful aunt, she had the satisfaction to feel that her own modest dress was ladylike if not as rich as that of her more favored cousin.

Her dear uncle should not be

ashamed of her; upon that she was determined.

And she was always amply rewarded for her efforts to please him by his kindly encouragement and approval.

CHAPTER IX.

SCHOOL DAYS.

Despite all her disadvantages of fortune, a perfect figure and a natural gracefulness of carriage gave Lucile an air of marked distinction.

Added to this, and which was perhaps her crowning charm, was a voice of peculiar richness.

To this, more than to anything else, was due a certain quiet fascination which she possessed; Nature's gift balancing the strokes of the adverse Fates!

At length the time arrived when she must enter the local seminary as a pupil. The polishing process was to begin at once.

Entering the school-room for the first time, she was perfectly conscious that she was not fortunately launched.

Naturally timid, the many strange faces at first confused and embarrassed her. Especially was she repelled by that of the principal, a spinster who wore little corkscrew curls, which bobbed up and down every time she moved, and whose little snapping black eyes seemed to be boring holes through her; an unpromising exterior for the arbiter of her school days.

It is no wonder that her preliminary examination was a dead failure, considering the stage-fright of the strange scene.

Though really a bright scholar, in her confusion she made the most exasperating blunders; but, as days passed by, she regained her self-possession

and subsequently took the rank to which her real merit entitled her.

She studied hard, and at the end of three years was prepared to graduate. The cross had been carried wearily and the crown was waiting for her now!

She appeared in a simple dress of pure white mull. Her soft, wavy brown hair, caught back with a silver arrow, the gift of her devoted uncle, hung gracefully in luxuriant ringlets.

The blue eyes of the young graduate were brilliant with excitement. The full red lips, just disclosing two rows of pearly teeth, and the bright flush of color gleaming in her usually pale cheeks, all conspired to make her look especially charming on that memorable occasion.

Never in her life had she been so conscious of herself.

The honors were at last equally

divided between her and Maud—at least so far as personality went. Even young ladies' academies deftly flatter the children of parents prominent in wealth and high station, wealth too often leading merit handicapped.

As this was the end of the last term, and many of the graduating class were to permanently return to their distant homes, it was decided to celebrate the event with a grand picnic.

The party was to assemble at the seminary, and, chaperoned by one of the teachers, go out thence by train to a spot about ten miles distant, and visit a charming grove by a lake, on which was a little pleasure steamboat; the gentlemen furnishing the music, the young ladies providing the lunch baskets.

It was a glorious, never-to-be-forgotten day in June. The exquisite

fragrance of the woods, the singing of the forest birds and the blithe humming of the bees filled all the balmy air with perfume and melody.

Merrily the happy hours flew by. The young ladies, realizing that the bondage of school life was ended, and keenly appreciating this their first taste of social freedom, with all that it implied of beaux and flirtations, were in the most exuberant spirits.

Perhaps never in after life was any one of the party happier than on that joyous summer day.

In the bright springtide of their youth, how could they realize what those of mature years know too well; —that too often, when they would fain grasp the substance, only the shadow would be there?

It is no wonder that we look back upon the memories of some perfect by-

gone day, like the one which these young graduates were enjoying, and are left dreaming and saddened to know that its promises, "like dead sea apples on our lips, have turned to dust."

They danced and sang and told stories. Thus cheerily and innocently the joyous day flew by all too soon.

The declining sun at length warned them it was time to return home, and hurrying their preparations they proceeded to the station, only to find that their train had gone. Consequently it was quite dark before they arrived in town, and Lucile and Maud, not finding Colonel Penhallow's carriage in waiting as they had expected, started to walk home, a distance of only a few blocks.

The river once crossed, they would have but a short remaining distance to walk.

CHAPTER X.

A CATASTROPHE.

When about halfway over the bridge a pair of runaway horses came frantically tearing along in their very path. It seemed equally perilous to turn back or to go forward, and the terror-stricken maidens were spellbound with fear.

To climb over the railing and hold on till they were past was the first impulse and the only seeming possibility of escape.

On the runaway animals came! plunging! rearing! foaming! with fright!

The carriage was violently swerving from side to side; its occupants were

ashen pale and their voices rang out in frantic shrieks for help!

People held their breath in terror, or turned their faces away, expecting momentarily that the inmates of the carriage would be dashed to pieces.

And no one noticed the two girls in their desperate attempt to save themselves!

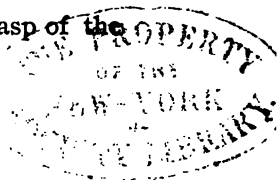
Maud, feeling rather than seeing that they had passed the final danger, uttered a fervent "Thank God!" and turned to look towards Lucile, but, oh, horror of horrors! Lucile had silently disappeared! In her excitement she had lost her footing and had fallen a distance of some twenty feet into the river. Then Maud's voice rang out in a wild alarm.

The full moon was high in the heavens, rendering every object pain-

fully distinct. Scores of eager onlookers now rushed to the central span of the bridge.

The crowd that had pursued the runaway animals, as well as the ever-changing tide of people crossing the bridge, looked helplessly on with bated breath at the struggling girl now visible below in the dark river, when a stalwart young man, unaware of the cause of the excitement, stepped upon the bridge, and, instantly taking in the situation, hastily threw off his coat, plunged into the deep stream, and caught Lucile, as she was sinking for the last time, and swimming rapidly to a rock, he held the head of the nearly drowned girl above water until she regained her breath.

Lucile looked silently up into the calm, grand face of the man who had saved her life, and felt the clasp of the



strong arms that had rescued her from a watery grave!

Can we wonder that the instantaneous photography—which no one can explain—in that swift glance stamped his glowing image on her soul, never afterwards to be effaced?

She felt he had risked his life in a noble, heroic impulse to save her, and her bosom swelled with an emotion unknown to her before.

Reassuringly he whispered: "My brave girl, don't struggle, only trust yourself implicitly to me, and you will soon be safe with your friends." And so, with a palpitating heart and a prayer to God, she resigned herself to the guidance of the iron-sinewed stranger, who, gently but firmly grasping her, plunged again into the river and swam rapidly towards the shore.

Cheer after cheer rang out from the

excited crowd as they landed safely. Dozens of arms were now stretched out eagerly to aid the rescuer and his fair burden.

Lucile, now entirely unconscious, was gently laid on the ground. The young man found himself in an awkward position, suffering keenly from the chilly waters and not knowing where to look for the garments which he had so hurriedly thrown off,—when an old lady of aristocratic bearing, who had witnessed the scene, alighted from her waiting carriage.

Her fine face beaming with admiration, she hastily approached him, and taking from her own patrician shoulders a warm mantle, wrapped it around the shivering form of the pale hero of the hour.

Addressing him in motherly tones, she said: "My gallant fellow, my car-

riage is at your service. You are now suffering, and may lose your own life, and the world can ill afford to lose such as you."

Again a cheer went up from generous hearts touched by the graceful action.

Maud, who had been speechless and paralyzed with fright, now made her way through the crowd of spectators to where Lucile was still lying in an unconscious condition, and with the aid of those around had her placed in a carriage, and hastily driven home, where she found the family in a state of great consternation at the lateness of their return.

This alarm gave place to heartfelt thankfulness for their preservation, when they learned what had happened, and how narrowly they had escaped being killed.

The family physician was instantly called in, and Lucile, though suffering from shock and bruises, was found to be otherwise uninjured.

Colonel Penhallow at once set about ascertaining the identity of the young stranger who had so gallantly risked his own life to save that of his beloved niece.

This he had little difficulty in doing, as the rescuer proved to be a young man who was even then a student in the law office of the colonel's intimate friend Judge Belden.

* * * *

John Ledew, orphaned at the age of seven years, was legally the ward of Judge Belden, and had been brought up in his family, beloved as one of his own children, and he was now about to enter the law firm as junior partner,

every one predicting for him a brilliant career on account of his rare talents.

Colonel Penhallow lost no time in calling on the young man. After cordially thanking him he invited him to call at his house, which invitation young Ledew readily accepted, having a not unnatural desire to meet the young lady who owed her life to him. For young Love weaves strange dreams of quickly budding romance in a young man's heart!

So, at an early day thereafter, he presented himself, accompanied by his foster sister, charming Ada Belden, and the young lawyer was formally introduced to the family of Colonel Penhallow.

The fact that Ada had been an early schoolmate of the imperiled young ladies rendered the romantic affair still more interesting, and, with evi-

dent admiration and sisterly affection, she learned the particulars of the gallant conduct of her foster brother.

Maud Penhallow, who had been greatly impressed by young Ledew's manly beauty and bravery, now rallied all her charms to captivate him; and she shone out bravely under her artful mother's approving eyes.

Lucile, still pale, grew a shade whiter, but did not speak. Her slender hand trembled perceptibly as she extended it in a mute salutation to her rescuer; and then, while attempting to express her thanks, she suddenly burst into tears, and, being unable to control her emotion, left the room.

Ada, whose sympathies were aroused, rose to follow her friend, but was promptly detained by Mrs. Penhallow, who said unfeelingly:

"No! no! you must not; she is

entirely too morbid! I do not approve of this sickly sentimentalism."

Ledew looked pained and shocked, and soon after took his departure in evident embarrassment.

His interview with Lucile had been inexpressibly pathetic, and had appealed to all the chivalry of his noble nature.

Ada, too, felt deeply for Lucile, and so they agreed tacitly to do all in their power to make amends for her evidently uncongenial surroundings.

Thus it was that they became frequent visitors to the home of the Penhallows, and Ada and Lucile became fast friends. But as time passed on, something far deeper than a mere friendship manifested itself in John Ledew's tender manner towards Lucile.

And she, poor child, since that fate-

ful night when he had so gallantly saved her life, had lived only for him. He was her ideal of all that was noble and grand in manhood, and her heart responded to the ardent glances of him who had dared the swift flood for her sake!

CHAPTER XI.

TREACHERY.

Madam Penhallow's sharp eyes did not fail to discern their cherished secret, which they had betrayed as "birds betray their nests, by striving to conceal them."

And, having quietly made up her own resolute mind to have John Ledew for a son-in-law, she now set about a secret plan to at once get rid of Lucile, and so clear the field for her own daughter, Maud.

About this time Lucile received the depressing news that her mother was in declining health; but as she had always been delicate, little importance

was attached to it as presenting new dangerous features.

But madam, seeing her coveted opportunity, and knowing that Lucile's high sense of honor would cause her to make any sacrifice of herself if she could be made to believe that Ledew was engaged to Ada Belden, began to open her batteries.

What could be more natural? They never hesitated to exhibit their affection and admiration for each other. Ada was an heiress! The advantages of the union were evident to the whole world.

This would be her winning card. And so she unsheathed the dagger to strike at the orphaned girl's heart!

And, next morning, at breakfast, with an assumed carelessness, she remarked:

"Girls, have you heard that Ada

Belden and Ledew are really engaged, and that the wedding day is already fixed?"

Maud simply laid down her knife and fork, and gave a low whistle (a way she had of expressing incredulity).

Here was news indeed! And a demolition of air castles!

Lucile turned deathly pale, but spoke no word. But her thoughts ran on like lightning.

It all seemed so clear now! God of heaven! How had she been so blind? Any one could have seen it at once! Their devotion to each other was now as plain as noonday!

How she had childishly magnified his passing kindness to herself until she had even been foolish enough to think he cared for her! And Ada must have seen her weakness! Per-

haps they had in secret laughed at her for her folly!

But no,—they were too noble for that! Pity her, they might, and that was almost as bad as being laughed at, to her sensitively organized mind. Oh! It seemed as if she must go mad! The blow had come so suddenly.

No! she could not even do that, she must face this trial like a woman. She owed her life to Ledew. There was no other way now but to avoid him forevermore. "God help me!" she prayed, with a throbbing heart.

And now the pathway of duty shone out before her. She felt that she could never meet Ledew again. She could go away, she could die, anything but meet him, knowing that he belonged to another! It seemed to be the very bitterness of death.

A sudden call now rang in her ears;

her mother's illness appealed to her as it had not before. At all events, it would be a reasonable excuse for going away.

And so, with a breaking heart, she decided to go home at once. This firm decision once arrived at, she lost no time; hurrying her simple preparations rapidly forward, another day saw her on her journey.

There was a happy gleam in Madam Penhallow's eyes when Lucile was out of her sight.

— Once started, and being whirled along at railroad speed, every hour seemed to widen the void of distance between her and the man on whom she had lavished all the idolatry of her young life, and who had shown her such glimpses of heaven as we imagine the angels catch when the pearly gates first open to their enraptured

vision. It was the agony of Love's supreme self-sacrifice to renounce him to another. In her helplessness she prayed for death. Life could be nothing to her but one long wail of sorrow, one path of darkness! Why had he saved her life but to wreck it?

All her soul rebelled against the bitterness of this trial. And, in the struggle against the decrees of Fate, she found no answer to the cry of her soul, hungry for the love of the man whose face ever haunted her, beautified by the superb daring of that unforgotten moment of danger!

John Ledew meanwhile had called at the Penhallow mansion, and was told by the watchful madam that Lucile had taken a sudden caprice to visit some relatives living at a distance, and that it was not known when she would return, if at all, in the near future.

Though it was with some secret misgivings of his own as to the real cause of her abrupt departure, he had to be content with the lady's answer, as he could learn nothing more.

He departed, hoping against hope that she would return soon, and feeling sure that she would in time write either to Ada or to himself, and so explain the seeming mystery.

He knew not, as yet, the madam's sly arts. But when weeks and months went by in silence, and no single word came from the absent one, his heart died within him. And the sentiments hidden so long throve wonderfully in those days of trial.

He would have written her all the pent-up passion of his ardent nature, as he had meant to do, and had only waited for a favorable opportunity. But where to send the letters he knew

not! For it was no part of madam's policy to inform him of Lucile's whereabouts.

Though frequently invited to the Penhallow house, and every possible means was secretly resorted to to captivate him for the colonel's daughter, he could learn nothing whatever of Lucile. It was a strange, strange mystery, and seemed like rank ingratitude!

And though, at times, resenting her lack of confidence, capriciousness, or whatever it might be, that kept her from writing, he was too much in earnest, and far too loyal, to swerve a moment from his intentions, or to bestow a single thought on any other woman, no matter how seductive her charms!

So, groping blindly in the darkness, he could only pray for her safety and trust to time and fate to reunite them.

CHAPTER XII.

LUCILE RETURNS HOME.

On arriving at her home, Lucile found her mother's illness much more serious than she had expected; it seemed an affliction having little apparent prospect of improvement.

Her daily life was now a sore trial. There was ever the cry of her hungry heart. But the satisfaction which her presence seemed to impart to her mother helped her to bear this sorrow, as she held her post as nurse unwaveringly and in silence,—ever tenderly and patiently ministering to the invalid.

Lucile was thankful to be able to

smooth her mother's pathway to the land of shadows, toward which she was slowly but surely tending.

The long, dreary months of the snow-clad winter at length wore away. For all dark days have their ending at last; and one spring morning, in the early dawn, when all the world seemed hushed and there was no sound save the chirping of the robins, the poor tired spirit of Katherine Albion took its flight.

Lucile, who had been watching with her all the long night, tenderly holding the little wasted hands till the dear ones waiting on the other shore should clasp them, knew at last that all was over—knew that she had crossed the silent river and joined her lost ones in that land where parting is not known, that she had entered the Celestial City, where the "King in His beauty"

"shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

And thus poor tired Katherine Albon entered into Life.

"So softly the chain was severed,
So gently was stayed the breath,
That it soothed the heart of the mourner,
And she blessed the Angel of Death."

Feeling that her filial task was ended, and now rallying all her remaining strength, Lucile summoned the sleeping inmates of the house, who tenderly and reverently performed the last sad offices.

Lucile, declining the well-meant attentions to herself, requested to be left alone; and when all was decently set in order, retiring to her own apartment and shutting out the bright glare and bustle of the new day, she threw herself down on her couch and wept unrestrainedly.

Blessed tears! The tired heart's one relief! Nature's nepenthe. The long pent-up fountain was unsealed, and the poor scorched brain found relief.

For even surcease of sorrow comes when the blow has descended, when the bitter cup is drained—drained to the dregs, as it now seemed to be.

The household, who had long witnessed her self-sacrificing devotion, now deeply sympathized with her, and their kindness was gratefully appreciated by the orphaned girl.

The funeral ceremonies over at last, Lucile felt that she had no right longer to trespass upon the hospitality of her friends, and learning that an assistant teacher was required at an institution in a neighboring town, she at once applied for and obtained the position.

It was, at least, a haven of refuge for

her. She was glad to have something to occupy her time in these dark days; besides, she sorely needed the remuneration which it would bring, for her mother's lingering illness had consumed their little remnant of fortune. And so, alone, she bravely steered her bark of life through the dark waters of adversity.

The figure of the young orphan, dressed in deepest mourning, modestly going to and from her duties, not only attracted universal respect and sympathy, but also excited a tenderer sentiment in one sympathizing heart,—that of a young lawyer who had become greatly interested in her.

There was a nobility in the lonely young girl's daily life which won upon all.

CHAPTER XIII.

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN.

Ned Gray, the young lawyer referred to in the previous chapter, was Lucile's ardent admirer, and having become tired of the slow process of the evolution of life in that country town, had gradually made up his mind to go to the far West for the purpose of bettering his fortunes and of establishing himself where he would find a larger field in which to develop his marked talents,—perhaps to return, laureled, to the halls of Congress.

Life opened its gates to him, and being madly in love with Lucile, he decided that he would tell her all his plans and then ask her to accompany

him to the region of the setting sun as his wife; for he felt that he could not go away unless she would accompany him.

So pleading his love, and painting a rosy picture of the great advantages to young people of starting in the West, and skillfully contrasting it with the humdrum ways of New England, he at length succeeded in enlisting her attention.

She listened with courteous gravity, but she could not respond to his glowing sentiments, and frankly told him so.

Marry Ned Gray? She could not! It all seemed so new—so strange! Such a violation of the past!

No! She would stay in the position in which fortune had placed her, and bear her lot as best she might!

True, she had found teaching to be

very trying and uncongenial. But her resources were so limited that she was confined to this occupation for a livelihood.

She cast up the whole situation. Ledew, she believed, was already wedded to another, and she, herself, was left alone in the wide world. Still, she hesitated to give her hand where her heart could not accompany it. And she hesitated and weakened, day by day.

Ned Gray was not the man to take a refusal where he had set his heart on winning. He was an ardent wooer. Failing to win any expressions of love, he pleadingly assured her that her graceful, womanly presence at his fire-side would be an effectual barricade to the many temptations that would lie in his western upward pathway.

He promised that her wishes should

ever be law with him, and, if a life of true devotion could count for anything, he was confident that he would win her love with the passing years.

At all events he vowed that he would be content with what she had to bestow, and, biding his time, would wait for his heart's reward, and to this sophistry she finally succumbed; and they were wed.

It was the setting sail upon unknown seas with a doubtful compass! Whither will it waft them? Into the haven of happiness, or onto the shoals of despair? We shall see.

The feeling that she was tenderly beloved, and that she was absolutely necessary to some one's happiness, had inspired her with renewed courage to fight the battle of life.

The young wife was true of heart, and earnestly and honestly prayed for

grace to enable her to perform her duties to the man whom she had pledged herself to honor and obey.

And, as the sunshine thaws the frozen earth after Winter's relentless reign, so his love warmed and refreshed her lonely life!

For hers was a nature fruitful in exceeding good things; a garden of noble womanhood!

It had come to her in all her lonely desolation, this love—springing up in the veritable “winter of her discontent.” When there appeared to be nothing but bleak winds and sullen skies, with no ray of sunlight or note of song-bird to herald the approach of spring-time, her heart had listened to the tender pleading of love.

Her gentle, clinging nature had found an object to twine itself around, and loyally would she preserve, since

she had won the affection and confidence of her husband.

Then this new life in the West would necessarily involve some personal sacrifice, which, in the main, she was glad of. She could thus make amends for not bestowing that which was his due, but was not hers to give. Loyal in word, thought and deed, she would ever be.

The past was now a closed book, closed never again to be reopened, even though her heart had been shut between its sealed lids. Never again should it see the light of day! The dust of ages should accumulate upon it, and so bury it silently and forever from her sight, and from the gaze of every one.

She had opened a new book, and on its initial page she had inscribed Duty as its watchword! Duty to God and

man! All material sense of self should be denied, and to Divine Principle alone would she henceforth devote her life.

CHAPTER XIV

POLITICS.

Ned Gray's versatile talents were of the order that generally succeed in any enterprise where persistency without scrupulousness is the test.

He started in with the determination to make money. And he made it. But, as in the case of many another young man, sudden wealth proved to be, indirectly, the cause of his ruin, mentally, morally and physically.

Of a naturally jovial disposition, he made personal friends very rapidly, and soon had a large, paying law practice.

The money which he thus acquired

was invested in a frontier gold mine, from which he realized a handsome fortune.

And when his wife proposed that they should return to their native state, as they could well have afforded to have done, and where the safeguards of a higher type of society might have shielded him, he put her off with promises; for here he swam in a sea of glory, being a leading light, a western beacon.

The truth was that the unconventional ways of the West suited his erratic character, and he liked the frontier bohemian way of living.

Here he was good as the best. He was king of his own set, and he saw with pride that his wife's cultivated mind and many accomplishments placed her upon a pedestal far above her associates. This was an added

social power. In the large cities of the East, they would be easily overshadowed, comparatively nobody, in the clash of giant fortunes and the shining circle of America's moneyed princes.

His wife's refined taste had beautified his home surroundings with the magic of her dainty feminine touches, and her gentle, wifely anticipation of everything pertaining to his personal happiness left him nothing more to desire. He lived in Elysium. He found himself in the easy enjoyment of all the creature comforts, without the restraints of a more highly organized state of society.

It was a natural theater for his peculiar talents; so Lucile yielded to his will uncomplainingly, sacrificing all the inclinations of her heart to a sense of marital duty, and to his latent selfishness.

She was resigned on looking it all over, and in realizing, also, the necessity of a life of action for him.

He was a rising man, and there, in his own field of triumph, might reasonably aspire to any considerable office in the gift of the people who knew his merits. His present prospects seemed to be shaping themselves most flatteringly.

A local election was already exciting the people; and Edward Gray's name was in men's mouths, day by day, as the most promising available candidate of his party in the field.

A member of Congress would soon be chosen, and Gray seemed to have the precedence over all the other candidates.

Yes, it was plainly her duty to yield the point, and she did so remembering the vow that she had voluntarily made

when she had given her life into his keeping.

Sacredly she had kept that vow, which she now as sacredly renewed. Her watchword still was Duty, ever Duty.

Thus far all had gone well with them—better than she had dared to hope, and had it not been for the insidious demon lurking in the wine cup, a different story had remained to be told, and the Recording Angel would have disclosed a fairer page to Ned Gray's final accounting in life.

Every one knows that an exciting political campaign is not conducive to habits of temperance, and unfortunately this western struggle was not an exceptional case.

There was "wine and wassail" everywhere. Temptation lurked in the laurels to be won, and Ned Gray's

money flowed in an unbroken stream.

Nominated by his party, a heated campaign followed, in which Lucile saw but little of her husband, and when he did come home it was too often in the small hours of the morning and with unsteady footsteps.

Her loving woman's heart now took the alarm. And when, upon the following morning, she would remonstrate with him, he told her that when once the election was over he would drink no more, but that he could not be elected if he now refused to drink with his ardent followers. Thus he tampered with the tempter.

Election day came, and Edward Gray's party, after a bitter struggle, was defeated.

Lucile, though herself greatly disappointed, like the true hearted wife that she was, strove to conceal her own feel-

ings and endeavored by every means in her power to sustain and comfort her disappointed husband.

But his pride was fatally wounded, and he sought the evil comforter. From this time on his path lay downward; he became utterly reckless and drank more and more heavily. In vain Lucile pleaded.

Promise to reform? Of course he did! But only to go on from bad to worse. And so, step by step, he sank lower and lower, until he became, at last, a confirmed drunkard, the butt of his former friends. Losing all respect for himself, he became so abusive and insulting to his patient wife that she was often obliged to take refuge with her pitying neighbors.

It was the old story of man's self-murder and of a helpless woman's clinging love and self-martyrdom.

Though, to do him justice, it was only when raving in his cups that he could so far forget the respect due to his own manhood as to so violate all sense of honor and decency in insulting and abusing the woman he had sworn at the altar to love, protect and cherish, and whom he had enticed to follow him into this comparatively new and rude country, away from all her friends and the associations of her former life.

No; debased as he had become, he had his hours of remorse, and, after his frenzied outbreaks, there were periods of contrition when partially realizing the atrocity of his conduct.

It was pitiful to witness his sufferings in attempting to break away from the enslaving habit. His awakened conscience stung him into making the most abject apologies and forming

resolutions that were made, alas! only to be broken at the first temptation. And though every kindness was shown the wretched man and everything done at home to help him, he invariably returned to his old habits. The way lay downward to the open pit!

CHAPTER XV.

A DIVORCE.

Trying as his abuse was, his maudlin attempts at reconciliation were even more disgusting and intolerable. And there lay the heart-broken woman's shame and sorrow.

At length, utterly disheartened, the mortification and humiliation became so unbearable that she was compelled to remove to a far-distant town. It was in sheer self-defense, to save her life and health, that she left him.

She knew not what was to become of her. She had very little to support herself with; but to live on with a man who had become so brutalized that his one aim in life seemed to be to

disgrace and degrade her to his own level, she could not. It exceeded the demands of even the marriage vow.

In all her trials she had maintained her own self-respect, and she would yield that up to none. It was the last remaining jewel.

She had striven by every means in her power to hide his social infamy, hoping on against hope that he might at last be reclaimed. But such miracles seldom happen in these later days.

By ruinous dissipation he had squandered all his property, and, sinking daily lower and lower, she now feared serious personal violence at his frenzied hands. There seemed to be "No Thoroughfare" in the blank night of this long sorrow.

* * * *

We will now return to John Ledew,

who, though having won distinction in his profession and accumulated and inherited wealth, remained still loyal to his early love.

He had learned of Lucile's marriage with profound sorrow; but while accepting the inevitable, he had buckled on his armor, and in the battlefield of life manfully took his place.

For he vowed he would never disgrace the ideal woman whom he had loved in vain. In recognition of his eminent legal ability, the President of the United States, who was his personal friend, had offered him a judgeship in the West. In a spirit of restlessness Ledew had accepted; for the lonely life among Fashion's throng galled him, day by day

He had traveled in foreign lands,—roving pretty nearly over the whole

civilized world. He yearned for new scenes, new faces, new trials, new victories. He would see what the far West had in store for him. It was the only Terra Incognita to him, now.

“There, methinks, would be enjoyment,
More than in this march of mind;
In the steamship, in the railway,
In the thoughts that shake mankind.”

Unwilling longer to compromise herself with the wretch who was her husband, the helpless Lucile saw that the only way in which she could be safe from his enforced intrusion, and the only door of physical safety, was in obtaining a divorce,—the last to open to her.

It was an ordeal from which her sensitive nature long revolted; but, acting upon the advice of her best remaining friends, the usual proceed-

ings were at last instituted. And this course once decided upon, it was thought best to lose no time in the matter. Accordingly, immediate legal steps were taken, and she nervously prepared to face the trying situation.

Thickly veiled, and leaning on the arm of her lawyer, she entered the court-room. Arrangements having been previously made by her counsel, the usual tedious delays were avoided, and when mechanically and without raising her eyes she was about to answer the preliminary question, something in the voice of the presiding judge caused her to look quickly up, and uttering an involuntary exclamation, Lucile fell back in a dead faint. Entirely unconscious, she was carried by order of the judge to his private office, where quiet and better air could be obtained. Removing her veil,

Judge Ledew (for it was he), incredulous and amazed, looked upon the face of his long-lost Lucile.

Her lawyer, having hastily gone to the nearest drug-store for restoratives, was astounded on returning to find the judge chafing the cold hands and gazing distractedly down upon the apparently lifeless face of his client, exclaiming:

"Oh, God! I have found her, at last, only to lose her, for she is dead!"

Then raising her tenderly in his arms he implored her to speak to him. A sigh from the pale lips showed that life was not extinct. Encouraged by this, he exclaimed, passionately: "Lucile! you shall not die!"

Wearily she opened her eyes, and looking helplessly around, she met the gaze of the man who had saved her life long years before,—whom she still

secretly adored, and whose image had never left her.

Death could not hold her when he called. Oh! those first waking moments, when she lay in his arms and read that in his eyes which was manna to her soul, and which he did not even attempt to disguise. Never will she forget it. Had the pearly gates swung wide open? And was this heaven?

In the darkness, afterwards, the memory of that one moment made her task seem light, for she now knew that he loved her, even as she had loved him.

Nothing could ever rob her of this treasure of the heart; and though they must part, perhaps never to meet again, they would be ever loyal to each other's memory, as we say of those who plant flowers on the graves of their beloved dead.

This one sweet solace would sustain her in all future trials. Fate might hurl its cruelest darts at her now! She could defy them all! The memory of this moment would afford her that which she had hungered and starved for all her life.

* * * *

But a woman's self-abnegation sealed her lips, and in the silent sanctuary of her own heart sentenced her to exile. No word should mar the sacredness of this hour. She would not even reproach him for marrying Ada, her friend. She must turn away from it all. There was no alternative. The nectar which filled the golden chalice, of which she had but tasted, was not for her.

She must go; but whither? And the world again lay wide and pathless before her. Like the poor dove sent

out of the ark, would she never find rest?

Her lawyer now recalled her to a sense of the situation, and at her request hastily called a carriage and escorted her to her residence, where, bewildered and heart-broken, she endeavored to formulate a plan of immediate action.

She recalled a recent advertisement from a distant town of a family desiring a governess. She would start for the place on that very night, and trust to the chance of being accepted.

It was a forlorn hope, but she would take the risk, leaving no clue to her destination, or rather suggesting the inference that she had taken passage on a steamship just then leaving the western coast. She would silently go away, and leave no sign!

* * * *

Judge Ledew was greatly distressed when the information of her departure was conveyed to him by the messenger whom he had sent next morning to inquire after her health, and to request an early interview. He could not fathom the mystery,—not understanding that Lucile believed him to be married to Ada and that, in justice to her friend, she dared not trust herself to meet him again. But recalling her abrupt departure just as he was on the point of declaring his love and to ask her to become his wife, as he had dreamed of doing years previously, it now seemed certain she had not cared for him. But, again, this seemed contradicted by the emotion she had involuntarily betrayed in their recent unexpected meeting.

It was a renewed mystery; but loyally he clung to his idol. It was

not in this man's nature to give her up; so tenderly had he loved her.

Learning the heroic fortitude with which she had borne the vicissitudes of her sad life, he now longed for the privilege of comforting her in her distress, and of shielding her from all future sorrow.

Still she was beautiful to him; still shining with the olden, unforgotten charms. Her pure serenity of noble womanhood had only chastened, not dimmed, her loveliness.

In that first sudden recognition, when recovering from her deadly swoon, he could have sworn he had read that in her eyes that answered to his own heart's passionate devotion.

Why, then, had she fled from him? And in silence, leaving not a single word? He would know at any cost. Never would he give up the search till

he had found her; and to this he swore.

She was free. He had made that certain, thanks to the favoring fortune that had placed it in his power! Twice he had saved her; and she belonged to him by every law, human and divine. He would not give her up!

As soon as his arrangements could be made, he would go forth in quest of her. It was the determination of a strong man, and nothing could divert him from his purpose.

CHAPTER XVI.

A RETROSPECT.

Lucile had barely sufficient money left to take her to her destination. Should she fail, what would become of her? She must not even think of it. It was too dreadful for contemplation.

In this dilemma her mind reverted to the home of her childhood—the home of the Penhallows—far away in the old Granite State; but she recalled the fact that the only surviving member of the family was her mother's sister, the once beautiful Elizabeth Penhallow, now a weary, broken-hearted old woman, and at last accounts an inmate of a lunatic asylum.

The old fortune teller had spoken,

for her, words of doom too sadly true.

Lucile, in her wanderings in the West, had learned the mystery of the disappearance of her Aunt Elizabeth's gallant soldier lover. Several years after the final repulse of the wild Indian assailants, a hundred miles from the beleaguered fort, some trappers had found a ghastly ring of skeletons, still clothed in the tatters of what had been the army blue.

Lieutenant Somers had been identified by a locket which must (from its position when found) have lain upon his heart. His name was engraved on the outside, and inside was a tress of shining hair, and a portrait of the radiant face of his fiancée, Elizabeth Penhallow.

These relics were now in Lucile's possession, thus proving that "truth is often stranger than fiction."

It was believed that Lieutenant Somers and his daring band of followers had started out on a ride across the trackless waste to bring in help to aid the outnumbered garrison.

To frontier eyes the story was plain. They had been followed; their horses had been stampeded at night; and the hungry redskins closed in on the soldiers at bay, who had fought and died amid the horrors of starvation and thirst, behind their little stone redoubts hastily thrown together.

The rifle shots of the soldiers had evidently done such effective and deadly work that the Indians had fallen back, but held their position until starvation and thirst did their work, and hearing the approach of a company of United States cavalry they stampeded in hot haste, but too late to save the lives of gallant Lieutenant

Somers and his brave men. Shudderingly, Lucile turned away from this o'er true tale.

Refuge in the old New England home of her ancestors was not for her. Death had claimed her beloved uncle, Colonel Penhallow. That affectionate friend and protector of her girlhood slept on the banks of the Hudson. Maud, now a widow, with a numerous family of children, had cares of her own, and the tide of adverse fortune had reduced Madam Penhallow from her once proud social station as a leader of fashion to a hollow-hearted, faded old woman, with "none so poor to do her reverence."

Lucile sighed deeply. She could not solve the problem of what was to become of her should she fail in her undertaking. Go away she must! There was the possibility of some mad

revenge by the man whom the law had now made a stranger to her forever.

To meet John Ledew again would be the bitterness of death. She thought of him as of yore, brave, resolute and tender, as when he battled for her life in the swift-flowing river. Again in her mind she saw him wan and saddened, grave with the law's responsibility, shaded by the overhanging ermine of the court, as when he signed her decree of divorce. Again, and last, the face of the strong man as he held her fainting in his arms and whispered words which thrilled in her quivering heart even yet.

They were words which told her of a love that had defied time, and, alas! words which were treason to his wife! She knew that the idol of her heart, the savior-lover of her girlhood, loved her madly still!

She had no tie in life but this. She dreaded to meet these strangers, to subject herself to their possible rudeness. And even were she accepted, the thought of taking her place as a subordinate in their household galled and humiliated her beyond expression.

Here her evil genius whispered that it was useless to struggle longer with adverse Fate. It was an unequal contest! Why not lay down her weapons of warfare, take "the goods the gods provide," and be at peace?

She dared not listen longer to the siren voice of the tempter. No! it must not be! A thousand times, no!

And thus tempest-tossed but resolute, this delicate, refined woman bravely pursued her trying journey to ask of strangers a place in the world as a simple bread-winner.

CHAPTER XVII.

GRAYLOCK MANOR.

Arriving at her place of destination, and inquiring at the station for the residence of the gentleman whose advertisement she had come to answer in person, she was informed that his estate was called "Graylock Manor."

As the name of the place suggested to her mind something somber, she was totally unprepared for the rare loveliness of the scene that burst upon her at once as she entered the superb grounds.

Heaven, earth, and art seemed to have conspired to outdo each other in the ideal beauty of this retired place.

Leaving the carriage road and leisurely sauntering along, she took a

shaded path leading to the villa, every turn of which revealed some new enchantment.

Oh! could she but rest here; she was so tired; so helpless! She prayed for peace—for the favor of Fortune here to stay her wandering for a time at least.

And now, misgivings as to the result of her mission, which in the hurry and bustle of her departure and journey had not been sufficiently thought of, forced themselves upon her with renewed vigor.

Coming to a rustic bench, she sat down, more for the purpose of collecting her scattered thoughts than of resting. Weary and heart-sore, her former heroism deserted her, and she accused herself of undue haste. Why had she fled from the only one in the whole wide world who cared for her?

Why should she have been so hard on herself?

Her heart clamored for its due.

Had she not a right to something better, even if at his wife's expense? For it was evident now that it was she, not Ada, that Ledew loved. The silent struggle was a fierce one, between Love and Fate's decrees!

In that moment of temptation she forgot everything but the man whom she adored, and the terrible extremity in which she found herself, with "no heart to pity, and no hand to save."

Her blood coursed madly in her veins. Well might her guardian angel hide her face from the madness that made her forget all that had hitherto been most sacred to her pure womanhood!

Sorely tempted, and with memory to beguile, in that moment's anguish she

would have defied the laws of God and man, and snatched from the unrelenting hand of Fate the protection and love which she so longed for. Her misery seemed more than she could bear.

But God is good, and "His mercy endureth forever." Not a sparrow falleth without His knowledge.

How long she had sat in this reverie she did not know, when she was suddenly aroused by a little black kitten, which jumped into her lap, and as if bent on being sociable, commenced licking her hand, and purring noisily, thus inviting a caress.

She was pleased with its friendliness and recalled the old superstition of good luck; and as if still further to reassure her, a white pet dove, with one of its wings clipped, fluttered down near by, and cooing softly

lighted upon the back of her seat. It was a happy omen!

As "drowning men clutch at straws," so she eagerly grasped at these little tokens as omens of coming good, and arising, she resumed her walk towards the picturesque chateau, which, as she approached it, looked like a fairy palace, with its soft gray gables, its dormer windows, and its unique outlines, harmoniously blending with a background of the variously-tinted greens of mountain ash, maple, hemlock and fir trees.

Roses, azaleas and other bright-hued flowers were scattered in luxuriant profusion over the lawn in front of the house, in the center of which a fountain was lazily playing, the soft splashing of the water rhythmically blending with the notes of forest birds.

Her thirsty soul silently drank it all

in. Starving for human love and sympathy, the repose and harmony of the picture soothed and quieted her fevered brain. It was an earthly Paradise. Shuddering at the thoughts of the previous hour, she inwardly thanked Him who had been "tempted in all points like as we are, yet ~~was~~ without sin."

She knew not how it was, or whence it came, but then and there a voice distinctly whispered, "Praise the Lord." And a sweet sense of peace, surpassing the power of words to express, pervaded all her being. Her hour in the garden had passed. The conflict had been a bitter one. But God and her Christian heart had triumphed.

And now, no longer hesitating, she ascended the broad steps of the mansion and rang the doorbell. A servant

appeared, and upon stating her mission she was at once invited to enter.

Quite a long time elapsing, however, before the lady made her appearance, Lucile had an opportunity to look around, very properly thinking she could perhaps judge the character of the mistress by the surroundings of the home.

An air of rare refinement was apparent in the subdued effects of soft Persian rugs, the exquisite draperies of Oriental tapestry, the quaint and antique furniture richly upholstered and artistically disposed about the room, the few but priceless pictures that adorned the walls; all these rare things bespoke refinement and wealth.

Thus lost in admiration, Lucile had failed to notice the entrance of Madam Pettigrew, until she found herself in her presence; and slightly embar-

rassed at the abstraction in which she had been caught, she rose, and courtesying, modestly stated her business.

Mrs. Pettigrew was one of those vivacious, breezy little women to whom an atmosphere of perpetual sunshine loves to cling; and smiling kindly on our poor wayfarer, she cordially invited her to partake of the noonday repast already served; for which Lucile secretly blessed her, as she was worn out with the fatigue of travel and long fasting.

Madam was most favorably impressed with her visitor's sweet face and ladylike manners. But they were then negotiating with a young lady teacher from a fashionable seminary, and she knew not how to act. It was a crucial time.

Lucile, being closely questioned with regard to references, frankly admitted

that she had never been a governess, but believed herself fully qualified to teach the various branches of a young lady's education, including the languages and music.

In this dilemma madam declared that she could not decide without consulting her husband, who had gone to a neighboring city on business, for the day.

As no train would leave the place that night after his return, Lucile was cordially invited to remain; and the poor wanderer was left without a word to end her anxiety.

Thankful, at least, for a reprieve, she slept soundly through all the night, and was awakened early next morning by the singing of the birds, that seemed to be holding a very carnival outside her window.

As the first rays of the morning sun

peeped into her room a pleasant sense of life, mingling with the languor of her first waking consciousness, slowly crept over her, and in a sort of dream she recalled the events of the last few days, and, sad as it had all been, there was a sense of coming triumph that must have been born of the very desperation of the situation.

It was life or death now. The turning-point had come.

Should she fail, nothing would be left her but to die. Perhaps it was even better so! Life could hold nothing now for her, and the rest of the grave after "life's fitful fever" looked very tempting. She felt her life had not been all in vain, since she had won that most priceless treasure of the heart, love—the love of the man who was all in all to her.

No one would miss her; and her

lover would soon cease to struggle between his love for her and his duty to his wife. Her face would fade from his heart and she would go out of his life. This was saddest of all.

"She *felt* 'twere better thus,
And yet, she could not *say* it,
Could not say 'twere well."

Musing thus, she fell asleep again and dreamed that she was in what seemed to be a subterranean cavern, of inky darkness. Deafening, crashing peals of thunder resounded through its passages, flashes of lightning, anon revealing horrible beings, who grinned and gibed at her; then, fainting with horror, she at last became conscious of a hand stretched out to her. Eagerly she had grasped it, and was saved!

And looking up to the light, which had suddenly transformed the dark-

ness of the cavern into noonday brightness, she saw John Ledew.

The morning sunshine, which had gradually glided into the room while she slept, was now shining full in her face, and flooding every object with its brightness, when she was awakened by a rap at her door, and a servant announced that breakfast was waiting.

Making a hasty toilet, she joined the family, and was soon introduced to Monsieur Pettigrew, who had assumed his most frigid and dignified manner, as a preliminary to coldly informing the lady her services would not be required. He would trust no stranger, however plausible.

Having discussed the whole matter with madam, his verdict had been, unhesitatingly, that the idea could not be entertained of admitting into his family, as teacher of his children, a

person of whom nothing was known, except her own statement.

She was probably only some agreeable adventuress. Such women, with records, are common in the far West. At all events, the regulation documents not being forthcoming, it could not be thought of. And so he formulated his decision in advance.

Madam thought best to humor his prejudice, feeling certain that when he had met the lady he would change his mind. Wise little woman! She knew her lord and master too well to oppose him ostensibly.

She also knew that he was a fair-minded as well as a kind-hearted man. Therefore, she felt that it was perfectly safe to let him enjoy his belief that he was having his own way, a feeling ever dear to a man's heart.

For some indescribable reason, her

womanly sympathies were enlisted, and she secretly meant that Lucile should remain at Graylock.

Her sagacity was rewarded in due time. For, before the meal was ended, so impressed was her husband with Lucile's manner and talents that he decided she should at least have a trial. And so she was accordingly installed at Graylock in her new rôle as governess.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOME, SWEET HOME.

Relieved of the terrible uncertainty that had so long overshadowed her, chastened, and with a heart filled with gratitude for her deliverance, she quietly picked up the broken threads of her life.

In this retreat she would surely be safe from all vulgar intrusion.

That was enough for the present. She now only craved peace, who had sighed for love.

She could leave the future in the hands of Him who had said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

The children grew to love her, and in their artless companionship she

found solace, as well as diversion from her misery, and the days peacefully glided into weeks.

The Pettigrews entertained lavishly, and great preparations were now going on for a house-party for the ensuing week, in honor of a distinguished gentleman who was to be their guest.

And as he was unmarried, several young ladies—representatives of the wealth and aristocracy of the surrounding country—had been invited to meet him.

There were to be excursions, routs, a garden party, dancing on the lawn—all the resources of local hospitality. The superb grounds were to be gayly illuminated by Chinese lanterns hung in the trees, and such other amusements and sports were devised as the occasion or the suggestion of an idle hour

should prompt. And to wind up with, there was projected a "bal masque" as the crowning glory.

The visiting guests were now beginning to arrive, and vivacious little Madam Pettigrew was quite in her element, fluttering here, there and everywhere, welcoming every one, giving directions to the servants and looking after everybody's comfort at one and the same time. It was indeed a time of joyous bustle.

Lucile, anxious to escape the excitement, had asked permission to take the children away for the week to a quiet resort near by, which was readily granted.

And so, the guests all having arrived, the festivities proceeded according to the program. "The dance went gayly on."

Nothing occurred to mar or inter-

rupt the pleasure and harmony of the whole event. All went "merry as a marriage bell," and the night of the grand masque ball at last arrived.

Standing in front of a mirror in her boudoir receiving the last touches to her dainty toilet was a lovely young girl, the acknowledged beauty and belle of the whole party. Her proud mother, regarding her critically, exclaimed:

"He cannot resist you to-night! Don't forget, my daughter, that he is to leave us in a few days. Can you not realize that it is the one opportunity of a lifetime? With his personnel distingue, his high position and all his wealth, he is a man of men!"

"But, mamma," replied the young beauty, "with all his great fascinations, which I admit, he is as cold as a glacier, and receives all this general

homage as though it were his own royal right! And then, he is so awfully, coldly polite, and calmly courteous, that it seems to place one at such a distance, as much as to say, just so far and no farther. It is of no use, dear mamma. But I now give you my word I will do my best to capture him. Oh! I should like to make him propose to me, if only to spite these other girls here that have made such a dead set at him."

Madam Pettigrew, desiring that Lucile and the children might have the pleasure of witnessing the romantic spectacle of the masque ball, had sent for them to return home at once. And, not wishing to appear at all discourteous, at the same time desiring to escape all general observation, Lucile quietly declined to enter the ball-room, but took up her own position on

the balcony outside, a mere looker-on in Venice.

She had never witnessed a scene so gay in her whole life, and as she regarded her more highly favored sister women there was a feeling of rebellion in her heart which she could not suppress.

She thought of that last time she had danced, of the picnic, and somehow on this night she thought of John Ledew as she had not thought of him since their last meeting.

Her heart cried out for him, her eyes filled with tears, she could bear it no longer! And so, retiring to her own room, she endeavored to shut out all thoughts of the revelry and the revelers.

My readers have doubtless recognized Judge Ledew in the distinguished guest in whose honor these

splendid festivities had been given at Graylock.

Having closed up his official duties preparatory to going in search of Lucile, who, he naturally supposed, had returned at once to her family friends in the East, he had accepted an invitation to pay a last visit to his intimate friends, the Pettigrews, previous to his departure. But his thoughts were afar off in all the clamor of the gaiety.

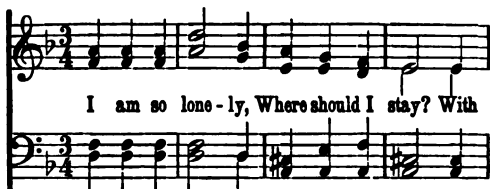
The night after the ball he had retired to his room at an early hour, expecting to bid a final adieu to his friends the following morning.

But being yet wakeful, he strolled alone down to the broad piazza.

Every one else had retired, as he thought, and he was quietly enjoying a last cigar, as well as drinking in the matchless beauty of the landscape by

moonlight, when strains of music of surpassing sweetness and tenderness attracted his attention.

The song was full of pathos, thus:



Angels are waiting,
Why should I stay?
When fond hearts that loved me
Are all far away?

Homeless and friendless,
Dark is the way;
With no one to love me,
In sadness I stray.

Dear pitying Savior,
Let me but rest
My head, faint and weary,
On *Thy* loving breast.

To weep again, never,—
Sorrow all past;
In *Thy* love abiding,
Sweet, sweet home, at last.

Unconsciously, as he listened, the tears stood in his eyes.

He felt that the song had been wrung from an aching heart, and an almost uncontrollable impulse to comfort the singer took possession of him; so subtle is the invisible tie that binds heart to heart.

Fearing to move lest he should break the witching spell, he fell to wondering who in this happy household could be the victim of a great sorrow? The light-hearted guests were all gone, and surely he knew every member of the family. Life

was only a golden round of enjoyment for them all. Unable longer to restrain his curiosity, he arose and cautiously drew the curtain aside.

What cheating fantasy of the night was this? What mockery of love? Could he believe his own senses? Was he dreaming?

No! by all the gods! It was Lucile! His own Lucile!

And then his heart leaped up in a mad impulse of sudden joy. One spring through the open window and he was at her side.

Overcome with surprise and emotion, Lucile would have fallen, but the judge, clasping her in his arms, said:

"No more fainting, Lucile!" And seeing the happy light that shone in her eyes, the love light that radiated from every feature, he added: "You are captured, my darling, this time.

Mine you are, and mine you shall be, both here and in the great Hereafter!"

"But your wife? Ada? Where is she?"

The judge answered smilingly: "My married sister Ada is well and happy."

Explanations followed, and each felt how cruelly they had been wronged. But in that hour there was no room in their hearts for anything but happiness.

Their love had been sanctified by its baptism of sorrow, and evermore should be priestess at their fireside altar, now "grounded on the Rock, 'gainst which the winds and waves shall shock, oh! nevermore!" Love was triumphant; love eternal and abiding! Tried as by fire.

It was the wee sma' hours of morning before they parted. The grandeur

of the night had led them to wander forth from the chateau out into the beautiful grounds. And there, in the blessed moonlight, with none but God and the angels to witness, they plighted their troth, "till death us do part."

But little more remains to be told. Joy bears its own story on its glowing face.

Next day Judge Ledew explained the strange past to his astonished friends, and a quiet wedding soon followed.

Only one thing more was requisite to complete their happiness, and that was to spend the remainder of their lives in the place which had been to them one of enchantment. And as if the repentant Fates were now bent upon making amends for past unkindness, they learned that the fashionable

Pettigrews had long contemplated spending several years abroad for the purpose of educating their children, and that the place was to be sold.

"I will give you this paradise, Lucile, for your kingdom," said the judge.

And thus beautiful Graylock Manor passed into the hands of those whose tempest-tossed barques had drifted into this haven—shall we not say heaven?—of ideal loveliness.

And Lucile became Queen of Graylock. And so, through night to light, it was well with them at the last, for sorrow abideth for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.



PART SECOND.

"Love took up the harp of life,
And smote on all its cords with might,
Smote the cord of self, that trembling
Passed in music out of sight."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CALL "TO ARMS."

One joyous, happy year had glided away since Judge Ledew and his bride came to live at Graylock Manor. It had been a busy year, too, for beautiful as the place seemed to be, the individuality that the possessor alone can impart was still lacking; and the strongly-marked character of the new owners was yet to be reflected in their surroundings. This necessarily involved some changes, many of which had already been made, and others were still in progress.

Then there was the usual round of country visiting, and entertaining, etc.

"Every moment, lightly shaken,
Ran itself in golden sands."

And thus the unfolding of life's rarest treasures day by day crowned their lives with the contentment and satisfaction that only those who have suffered can fully appreciate, when the heavy clouds of adversity have suddenly lifted, and the bright sunshine of happiness illumines their pathway.

Judge Ledew had gladly exchanged the turmoil and cares of an active professional life for the rural occupation of a country gentleman, and was looking forward to a tranquil future amid these charming scenes, shared by the dear woman who was to him the crowning blessing of his life. When the overwhelming news of the outbreak of the Rebellion was spread broadcast over our land, stirring with indignation every loyal heart, and firing with patriotic zeal the flower and the

chivalry of the nation, he roused himself to action.

It was a rude awakening from his dream of domestic security and happiness; but duty called in clarion tones, and when was John Ledew deaf to the call of duty? Unhesitatingly offering his services to his country, a commission as colonel of a regiment was tendered him, and accepted at once.

There was the hasty organization, the busy preparation for the march, and the solemn muster in. At the earliest possible moment thereafter, Colonel Ledew proceeded with his command to the front.

"The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring."

Lucile, who had meant to bear up for her husband's sake, broke down at parting. She seemed to be drifting once more on darkened seas, and pas-

sionately weeping, she clung to him in all the wild abandon of this her first sorrow since she had been his wife.

She would have accompanied him, to at least be near him in the dangers that he must necessarily encounter, but for her delicate state of health, which forbade her leaving home at this time. Her husband comforted her with his love, and the assurance that he would be back again long before her hour of trial came.

It was the period of "ninety days" and "On to Richmond," and while the call to arms was imperative, Ledew believed that the struggle would be brief as disastrous to the haughty rebels; for was not the sword of Columbia drawn to avenge and restore? But should he fail to respond to the call of his country, he assured his wife that he would feel unworthy

of her love, and that he had forfeited his claim to her own and their offspring's respect. There was here a tender third link being forged in the chain of love. He had something now above even his country's cause to espouse. He had the honor of his cherished wife and child to maintain. When the history of the Rebellion should be told, his loved ones should refer with ever-increasing pride to the page on which his name should be enrolled—the story of his deeds upon the battlefield. All the coveted glory was for those whom he held far dearer than his own life.

Lovingly Lucile hung upon his words, and all her woman's soul did him proudest reverence. For was he not her hero as well as her husband?

So grand was her faith in his God-given inheritance of dominion over evil

in every form, that she was fain to believe that he would be safe even on the field of battle, and so unselfishly sacrificing her own personal feelings of regret in the matter, she girded on her warrior's sword and bade him God-speed; but the nervous shock of parting for the time had overcome her, and while temporarily losing the infinite in the material sense, she did both him and herself an unintentional wrong.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FORTUNES OF WAR.

The bitter pang of parting was over at last, and Lucile, who had become a convert to metaphysical science, religiously realizing the importance of denying all appearance of sorrow and affirming only those conditions which she most desired, soon became reconciled to her environment, and cheerfully accepted the situation.

There were so many things to be looked after, now that the whole responsibility of the estate rested upon her—for her husband had given her *carte blanche* to do as she pleased—that the days were never quite long enough to accomplish all she wished.

She was queen of the realm—of her own Graylock, and though loyal and loving her subjects, she often found herself taxed to the uttermost to fulfill all her duties, socially and otherwise. Fortunately for her, she was relieved of all anxiety of the servant problem. Wealth and discipline had surrounded her with an efficient household.

Her servants all loved her, and loyally combined in anticipating her wishes. In their minds they followed their honored chief in his patriotic career, and in their tender watchfulness and care of his wife they gave expression to their appreciation of the service he rendered, and of the sacrifice he was willing to make for their own and the country's welfare. Lucile's friends and neighbors, too, rallied around her and brought her cheerful news when they could, while

everything was now done by her with reference to the time when her husband would return;—the pleasant surprises she would have for him, and the approval she would read in his dear honest eyes of the way she had managed all their affairs, and the changes and improvements she had designed to please him. She recalled one trivial matter in particular, wherein they had differed for the first time as to a perfect accord in their judgment, each insisting that it should be according to the other's views. It had consequently never been consummated. It should now be done just as he had suggested and according to his idea.

Shortly after Ledew's regiment arrived at the seat of war the battle of "Bull Run" was fought, in which he distinguished himself by his gallantry and bravery. The war's dark pano-

rama now ran on in crimson colors, to the harsh notes of roaring cannon and screaming shell. Other battles followed, in which he was ever a foremost figure; his men often falling around him, until it seemed that he had a charmed life that nothing could harm; for Death, the reaper, leaned upon his keen-edged scythe; brushed past him closely, and yet passed him by.

News, when possible, was daily wired to his anxious wife, who thus proudly shared in all his victories, albeit with a heart-chilling apprehension, which often caused her cheek to blanch and her step to falter as these fateful messages were handed her.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN HEIR.

The "battle summer" had glided past. The anticipated event which should have brought her husband to her side was almost upon her, and still she was alone.

The bright beams of the harvest moon had one night tempted her outside, for the evening was sultry, and the landscape she loved was never more beautiful than when viewed by the dreamy moonlight. Her whole soul called for her husband. Why had he not fulfilled his promise? Seating herself on the veranda, a vague and indescribable feeling of unrest took possession of her, and yielding to the

luxury of tears, she was unconscious of the approach of footsteps until they were close at hand. It was her own "soldier boy," who had come back to redeem his pledge.

One quick look of recognition, and then the husband and wife were locked heart to heart, in a fond embrace. Obtaining a brief furlough while the armies were resting, he had hastened to her the first possible moment.

Noticing the trace of tears on her face, a cruel sense of her loneliness, of the injustice and horror of the long-drawn-out war that must thus separate families—the just suffering for the unjust—smote him sorely, and increased his bitterness towards the rebellious South, and he vowed that the enemy should answer to him for these bitter tears that were thus wrung from the wife whom he had sworn to love and

cherish, for he felt that his place, by right, at this time should be by her side; and her patience and helplessness appealed to all the tenderness of his noble nature.

Lucile was too content to think of anything but the surpassing happiness of the present moment, as he fondly held her to his breast and promised her that once the war was ended they would never again be separated, and she forgot the long months of silent anguish in the golden peace of the hour. How his heart went out to her, as the approaching realization of their hopes dawned upon him! There was something sacred in the dual tie that bound her to him now, never before realized or imagined.

To go away and leave her again seemed the height of cruelty, and yet he knew that it must be so, for having

espoused his country's service there was no retreat, save in dishonor.

He had at the last moment been able to obtain a short leave of absence, and had thus taken her by surprise. The days that followed were days long to be remembered—an elysium of tender tranquillity undisturbed by the noise of battle.

How delightful it was to go over the dear old manor together, and how Lucile's heart bounded as he gave her warmest meed of praise for all that she had done! Never had the meaning of that charmed word, home, been so realized by him, or presented such attractions as now, when turning his eyes from the scarred battlefield, with its crimson sod, to the smiling meadows of Graylock Manor.

The precious days glided away all too soon, and Colonel Ledew's brow was

grave, while ever a wistful light shone in Lucile's clear eyes.

His furlough was nearing its close when there was a call at midnight; and the soldier's heart loyally responded to this, the tenderest appeal known to man, though it was but the harbinger of a joyful dawn; for with it came a precious little life to brighten and cheer their hearts. A beautiful little baby boy had opened its wondering eyes on this world of ours, and Lucile's cup of happiness would now have been full and running over but that the husband and father must so soon be torn away, for the gleam of steel was once more lighting the Virginia hills.

There are babies and babies; and although there are some who seem to be born without any apparent intelligence in the first weeks of their exist-

ence—slowly unfolding natures—who subsequently develop rarely bright intellects, there are others who come to us with the stamp of nobility and individuality so clearly defined that we know at once God has set his seal upon them,—and such an one was little Penhallow Ledew, as he was christened, who not only gave rare promise for the future, but was the present embodiment of all that could be wished.

The time was now fast approaching when Colonel Ledew must return to his regiment. The summons came all too soon, and, though shaken at heart, it found him ready.

With feelings of deep emotion he bade adieu to his idolized wife and infant, to again take up his place where the thronged camp, the ringing bugle call, and the wild combat, would be his daily life—a reversal of all

man's heaven-born aspirations! the grim art of killing.

Lucile held up her babe for him to bless at parting, and clasping both mother and child in one long, loving embrace he earnestly prayed that God would bless and protect them in his absence, and then turned his face once more towards the foe. Thankful, at least, that his dear ones would be exempt from the cares and dangers that beset his own pathway, the soldier bade adieu to his sheltered home to return to the lingering war which, contrary to his own and almost every one else's expectation, was dragging its weary length along with no prospect of an ending in sight; for stern as was the northern invader, as fierce-eyed and keen the Southerner waited to lock arms in the fearful struggle of brothers reeking with each other's blood.

Jealousy, race pride, social emulation, and sectional fury fanned the war beacons which blazed out along the Potomac, sending their red gleams afar in terror.

CHAPTER XXII.

"KRISS."

Two years have passed since Colonel Ledew's departure from Graylock Manor, and little Penn, as he is now familiarly called, is the light of the household. Rosy and chubby, with his mother's blue eyes—otherwise strikingly like his father—a sturdy independence characterizing all his movements, he might have served as a model for one of those entrancing little cherubs whom the old masters loved so well to paint. His favorite playmate was a large Newfoundland dog whose name was "Kriss." Apparently aware of the importance of his vocation in life, Kriss followed his young

master everywhere with a more than human devotion. They were inseparable. Whether rolling on the fragrant grass, playing among the flowers, or quietly sleeping in his little crib, the faithful animal held his post as sentinel and protector of the child, rarely losing him from view.

Sometimes when little Penn became tired out with the dog's great, clumsy efforts of entertainment, of rolling over with him on the grass, the playful animal would bound off in pursuit of a bird, or a squirrel, sometimes catching it, and then returning proudly would lay his trophy down at little Penn's feet, or in his lap, a token of love and volunteer service.

One sultry afternoon when they had strayed away farther than usual from the house, the dog started off in pursuit of something which gave him a

long chase. He dashed far out of sight of the child, and no sooner had he disappeared than a besotted-looking specimen of humanity sprang from the bushes, where he had been hiding, and quickly seizing little Penn, covered his mouth and nostrils with a sponge saturated with chloroform, and instantly fleeing with him into the dense thicket made off as fast as possible. It was an unchallenged triumph of greed and crime!

Kriss returning, and not finding his little playmate, hastened back to the house, and not finding him in any of their accustomed haunts, at once set up a piteous howl, which immediately brought Lucile and all the servants to see what was the matter. There was a wild mustering of anxious searchers in hot haste.

Search was made for him every-

where, the dog frantically leading them on. Hither and thither they ran, but no little Penn was to be found.

Some dispersed through the vast grounds; others explored other parts of the region round about; some ran in one direction, and some in another, hallooing and calling his name.

In the grounds there was a beautiful little lake; thither the half-frantic mother bent her steps, and finding seemingly fresh little footprints, which had, however, been made the day previous, her heart was torn with anguish at the reasonable supposition that the idolized child had fallen into the water and been drowned. An excited crowd prepared to drag the lake, and sorrow reigned supreme.

Great was the excitement, but Lucile, though half-frantic, did not forget her metaphysical philosophy in

this hour of trial. There was her star of hope behind the clouds; and so quickly came the scientific demonstration of her thought that Kriss, who had kept up his howling, seemed to have a sudden inspiration, and jumping up he started off on the run as fast as he could go, racing back to the spot where he had left little Penn, and vigorously snuffing around, dashed away on the scent, barking and leaping as if for life. Suspicion now grew apace, and willing feet followed the baying animal.

The others followed as fast as they could, though they had great difficulty in keeping up with the dog, and just after they lost sight of him a fierce outburst of barking and at the same time an agonized shriek from a man caused them to hasten to the spot whence the uproar proceeded.

The man was struggling to free him-

self, but Kriss had him by the throat, at the same time tearing him with his great paws, for the dog was wreaking his vengeance upon the cowardly child stealer!

They tried in vain to call the infuriated animal off, but when they saw dear little Penn lying on the ground, still unconscious from the drugging he had received, their indignation knew no bounds; and leaving Kriss and the tramp to fight it out, they tenderly cared for little Penn, who just then slowly regained consciousness, and feebly called out, "Kithie, Kithie."

Hearing the child's voice, Kriss, now in transports of delight, let go his hold of the man, and ran back to the recovered child, jumping and barking in frantic joy until he made the welkin ring. The good news was immediately sent to relieve his agonized mother.

Making a feeble attempt to escape, the wounded ruffian was caught and severely dealt with. The wretched creature, conscious that he deserved no mercy, watched his opportunity, and drawing from his pocket a pistol, deliberately placed it to his head and fired. There was a shriek of horror from the excited throng, who saw the miscreant fall a corpse before them.

Death was instantaneous, and thus miserably ended the career of one who began life with every prospect of success and happiness, and who, but for the social curse of intemperance, might have been an ornament to the world. None knew the fierce baffled desperation that nerved the wretched suicide's hand. The only clew to his identity was a letter found on his person bearing the address of "Edward Gray."

The curious crowd of strangers saw no vision of the past in the battered outcast's dead face; but Lucile shuddered at the mention of his name. None save herself knew who he was or the motive of his crime, and Edward Gray passed unrecognized beyond the dark river. Thus her only enemy vanished forever from her life.

After this episode the tie which bound little Penn and Kriss was stronger than ever before. Kriss was the lionized dog-king of the whole countryside. .

But it was now the dog that owned the boy, and not the boy who owned the dog, and Kriss' claim to proprietorship was undisputed and recognized by every one within the broad domain of Graylock Manor. So narrowly did he watch the child that he never left him, and it would have been unsafe for

any one outside the family to have touched him.

The sagacious beast was always on guard. When the child awoke in the morning it was usual to see Kriss, with his two great forepaws resting on the child's crib, looking down at him, as much as to say, "It is time for us to be up, you and I! I am waiting for you; come!"

And when little Penn would open his eyes and put out his little hands, the look of affection that would come into the creature's eyes seemed almost human.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A TELEGRAM.

The autumnal season had come again, with its falling leaves, light and shadowy effects of billowy clouds, the thin clear air, the drowsy humming of insects, the falling of the ripened nuts in the woods, the echoing ax of the woodman sounding sharply from the russet hills; and all the varied forms of nature that attest to the winding up of the accounts of summer were everywhere to be seen.

Hearing the crunching of footsteps on the graveled walk, Lucile arose and went to the window, and noticing that it was the telegraph messenger, she was about to run out to meet him, when she observed that his step was

not as brisk as usual, and that he did not look up. Ah! the sad burden of those war messages! The dismal tidings of woe!

A presentiment or foreboding of approaching trouble had disturbed her all day, but she had argued with herself that it was only the effect of the depressing autumn weather. Her heart now died within her at a certain something which she could not define, but was yet perfectly palpable to her supersensitive condition of mind. There was the near approach of disaster in her shuddering heart, and she feared to know the certainty. She did not move; a stony fixedness seemed to hold her to the spot, and dropping feebly into the nearest seat she waited until the servant brought her the message and withdrew from the room.

She did not even then open it at once, but sat holding it and trying to brace herself for the trial which she felt sure was awaiting her.

At length, summoning all her remaining courage, she tore open the envelope and read, "Colonel Ledew has been wounded in battle, and taken prisoner."

Now was the time to prove her faith; and nobly did it work in carrying her through this most trying ordeal.

Strong in her metaphysical belief, she could boldly claim, "The eternal God is my refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

This she did, denying all material sense of suffering, and affirming the omnipotence and infinite love of God—she rose to that sublime height of realization where she could say, "Thy will be done."

The next morning she announced to her household that she was going away on a long journey, and would take little Penn and her maid with her, and that she would leave everything in their care until she returned, knowing that her interests were theirs. They had all proved themselves to be her devoted friends, and she proposed to trust them as such.

Had anything been wanting to make them faithful this mark of confidence in them would have done it; but they all individually loved her for her gentle patience and goodness to them, and it would have been unwholesome for any one caught in an attempt to wrong her to linger around Graylock.

In the lone watches of the night she had formulated a plan of going direct to Washington—resolutely determined to be near her husband, and if by any

chance she might do so, to cross the lines and gain access to his prison.

Arriving in due season at her destination, she proceeded at once to Willard's Hotel, the popular hostelry of Washington at that period, and conferring shortly after with Mr. Stanton, the Secretary of War, she learned that her distinguished husband, though disabled, had not been fatally injured, and that our government was then trying to effect his immediate exchange with other important prisoners of war.

But crawling days ran into weeks, and nothing effective was done; neither could she obtain any reliable information respecting her husband's condition.

The army's operations had suspended the amenities of polite warfare. This was not what she came for, and she made up her mind she would

attempt to cross the lines at all hazards and penetrate Libby Prison. But what to do with her child she did not know. She felt she could not leave him, and surely she could not take him on her perilous venture.

She now recalled the fact that Ledew's foster-sister, Ada (formerly Ada Belden), was living near Washington, and she at once dispatched a letter to her, disclosing her plans and asking permission to leave the boy in her charge during her projected absence.

The letter was answered at once by the warm-hearted Ada in person. The two women, affectionately embracing each other and renewing their old allegiance, joined in the plan to aid the one so dear to them both.

Ada had only one child, an infant a few months old, but she said if

she had a dozen it would be all the same—little Penn would be more than welcome, and should be guarded by the fondest affection in his parents' absence. As it was, she was delighted; and insisted upon carrying him away with her at once to her peaceful home on the banks of the Potomac. It being decided that this was the best thing to do, the nurse was ordered to make immediate preparation for the journey.

Lucile bore up bravely until the hour of separation came; then clasping the lovely child to her breast in an agonized embrace, she placed him in Ada's arms, and dropping on her knees uttered a fervent prayer to God that he would bless and protect her precious child.

Ada, good angel as she was, sympathizingly assured her that she need

have no fear, for he would be guarded as her own child, and begging her to be careful of herself prepared to depart with the child and nurse, leaving the anxious mother, bereft of both child and husband, to pursue her apparently dangerous venture into "Dixie's" land.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE CONFEDERACY.

Lucile, who had partially unfolded her plan of action to the astute Secretary of War, was emphatically cautioned against it, and frankly told that it would be worse than madness to attempt it. But becoming desperate at the delay and uncertainty, she finally decided to take the matter into her own hands, and so skillfully and quietly did she lay her plans that she succeeded in getting through the lines of the hostile armies and in eluding all direct questioning by the liberal use of money and the sympathizing assistance of one or two persons of rank in both services. Her gentle demeanor

had, so far, disarmed all hostile interference. But on arriving in Richmond, great was her consternation at being immediately arrested as a political suspect. Her northern face, her rich dress, and her unfamiliar accent betrayed her.

For fear of the complications that might arise to both her husband and herself she dare not disclose her real name or her errand, and she was soon the inmate of a place of [detention—treated as a possible female spy.

Quietly submitting to the outrage, she mentally denied their power to harm her, silently claiming the protection of the All-Father as her defense and her deliverance, and the superiority of spiritual power over physical force was again demonstrated. Subsequently, on being arraigned to answer the charge of conspiracy, she

met in the magistrate an old-time friend of her beloved uncle Nicholas.

General Fitzpatrick, now a leading dignitary in the southern Confederacy, immediately recognizing her, extended both hands, and leading her to a seat eagerly listened in private to her story, and promised at once to use all his influence in obtaining for her an interview with her husband. The general immediately secured her personal release, and soon escorting her to his own house, she was the recipient of all that kindly hospitality for which the southern gentlemen and ladies are so deservedly noted.

General Fitzpatrick promised her at the first possible moment that he would himself visit the military prison, and while informing her husband of her presence, make secret arrangements for her visit; but in the interval

he begged her to fortify herself for the interview by rest and relaxation from the great mental strain through which she had passed, and he begged her to beware of prying eyes and not sacrifice his influence in her behalf.

Of course there were yards of red tape to be gotten over before anything could be accomplished, even with General Fitzpatrick's prestige, for the war had hardened hearts otherwise kindly. Besides, the general had great responsibilities of his own in other directions, and several weary days had to pass before her anxiety could be relieved by the certainty of the coming meeting.

And here again all her fortitude was called into requisition;—to be so near her idolized husband, and feeling as though she could fly, she was, figuratively, "tied hand and foot,"—seem-

ingly a mere puppet in the hands of others.

The whole country was under the strictest martial law, for Virginia was one vast camp and battle arena.

The clank of sabers, and the intonations of distant guns, were constantly resounding in her ears, and the wildest excitement was everywhere apparent.

The thinness of the defenders' forces was indicated by the haggard and anxious faces everywhere to be seen.

Making inquiries, General Fitzpatrick learned that a malignant fever had broken out in the prison, and that Colonel Ledew had been stricken down with it, and was now lying very low, with no seeming prospect of recovery.

How to break this terrible news to Mrs. Ledew he knew not. The kindly general was puzzled as to his line of

mercy or duty here; but feeling that it had to be done he proceeded to break the news as cautiously and gently as possible to the anxious woman, whom he could not longer put off.

Expecting that she would give way to a perfect tempest of grief, he was greatly astonished when she calmly arose and announced her determination of instantly going to Colonel Ledew's bedside. "But, my dear madam," said the general, "it is impossible! Think of the horrors of a malignant hospital fever; even the nurses and surgeons dread to face it! I cannot permit you, madam, to endanger your life, by exposure to this terrible contagion!"

He pleaded long and earnestly with her. "Besides," added he, "your husband is delirious, and would not recognize you. I, myself, will see

that he has the best medical attendance, and will arrange that any change in his condition shall be reported to you at once. Think of your child, I beseech you, madam! Should your husband and yourself be taken away, what would become of him in his tender infancy?"

"Ah, the cruel war! When would it end?" he soliloquized, and the gray uniformed general sadly listened to the booming of the Yankee guns down the James River. For an "army with banners" was creeping nigher to them day by day!

Battle, disease, sickness, want and semi-starvation were wearing away the matchless infantry of Lee into truly skeleton battalions, and the red harvest was reaped daily, while grim death laughed, as he paused to whet his bloody scythe.

CHAPTER XXV.

LIBBY PRISON.

General Fitzpatrick, finding that entreaties and arguments were alike unavailing, reluctantly accompanied the devoted wife to the doors of the prison hospital. In bidding him adieu Lucile feelingly thanked him for his kindness, and told him that she would not return to his house to expose the members of his family to any possibility of the contagious disease, but that she would remain as nurse with her sick and wounded husband, if permitted to do so.

The general could only wring her hand in silence. He was powerless to combat such devotion. To his mind it

was all rank madness, and he regretted having told her of the seizure until all was over, for he had no doubt that it would end fatally. The surgeon held out no hope, and he felt that he would be, in a measure, responsible for her wasted life, and yet, somehow, he felt that her sublime courage and devotion would sustain her, and he could hardly understand how a man with such a wife could die. "Oh, if God would only stretch out His mighty hand!" And he made up his mind that everything in his power should be done to aid her, for her devotion had touched him to the heart's core.

His influence was a power, and so the best quarters were assigned to her in the prison hospital. And thus she entered upon her mission of love.

Lying on a wretched cot, she found her husband, haggard and wasted from

the delirium of fever—the mere wreck of his former self. Taking one of his burning hands in her own and laying the other on his pale brow, on which death seemed to have already set its seal, she brushed back the matted, unkempt hair; then dropping on her knees she silently but confidently committed him into the hands of omnipotent and omnipresent love and power.

It was not long before the rigid features began to relax, and he fell into a deep sleep from which he did not awake for several hours, during which interval she hovered around his bedside putting things in order as best she could.

The doctor, looking in occasionally, said: "This amendment is marvelous, but it promises well. His condition when he awakes will decide the case," and pompously assuming all the credit

to himself the egotistical southern physician took his departure.

Lucile steadfastly held to her sublime faith, "nothing wavering"; was rewarded, after hours of waiting, by seeing her husband open his eyes, and with a smile of astonished recognition to hear him feebly whisper her name. Laying her hands on his lips to indicate the necessity of silence, she tenderly kissed his brow, and bending over his pillow told him in a fond whisper she had come to stay with him. The tender look of gratitude which he gave her amply repaid her for all that she had suffered to reach him, or could now do in fighting for his life.

An expression of entire satisfaction settled upon his face, and he again fell into a peaceful slumber from which he subsequently awoke in a decidedly

improved condition, to the astonishment of every one.

His convalescence now seemed assured, and he progressed rapidly towards a recovery under the watch and ward of Lucile's loving heart.

General Fitzpatrick was overjoyed when he heard the good news, and he then made immediate arrangements for private quarters for them in one of his own houses in the outskirts of the town, detailing some of his own servants to wait upon them; every provision was made for their comfort. Colonel Ledew was under parole and a nominal guard at night.

Oh, those days of convalescence! They were days of love's own rejuvenescence. Though still a prisoner, with apparently little prospect of release (for it seemed to them that they had been deserted by their government

and friends alike), they were happy in each other.

They were ignorant of the real truth, which was that Colonel Ledew's death had been reported officially, and he had been given up as dead. So he was apparently mustered out forever.

Lucile had frequently written to Ada, but her letters had not reached their destination, for the "underground postal line" was precarious, and even heavy money bribes would not insure the delivery of letters, which had to be trusted often to sordid and callous strangers.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONVALESCENCE.

In that dreamy southern climate, with the swelling buds now bursting into verdure, and the little garden which surrounded their cottage one mass of swaying peach and apple blossoms in their delicate, glowing colors, to lie in a hammock, or recline in an easy chair with his devoted wife to anticipate his every wish, and to amuse and entertain him, was a paradise for the war-worn soldier.

Sometimes silently sitting by his side while he slept, sometimes reading to him, and sometimes talking of their child and anticipating the time when they would all be back in dear old

Graylock again, Lucile beguiled the sick man into forgetfulness of everything but the blessing of her companionship.

General Fitzpatrick now freely visited them as often as his arduous military duties would permit; and to him they looked for continued protection and secret assistance in getting away from the Confederacy as soon as an exchange could be effected. Their friend was true and loyal, and had it been in his power General Fitzpatrick would unhesitatingly have given them the best escort in his command and set them at liberty, passing them over the lines in safety. He stood ready to do so if he could. For he admired the intrepid soldier not less than his brave little wife, who had deliberately walked right into the very jaws of death to save her husband.

But while in a position to command obedience among the southern people, they would have instantly rebelled at any known concessions to the hated "Yankees," as they were called. The raw wounds of war were rankling in every bosom now.

The native gallantry of southern gentlemen towards ladies, however, permitted him to openly assist Mrs. Ledew, who was known to be the kinswoman of his dear friend, Colonel Penhallow, now dead.

The situation of the Ledews was a problem which at present he could not fathom. There seemed to be no way of escape, and he feared to ruin both them and himself by an attempt so uncertain, and so they drifted from day to day in a hopeful expectancy of something turning up.

All sorts of rumors were circulated

concerning the movements of the Union army. The stories were wildly conflicting and borne on the wings of fear. Sometimes it was reported they were encamped within a day's march of the city, and that they would be inside of Richmond within twenty-four hours. No one seemed to know the truth of the military situation.

Of course, in such an event, Colonel Ledew, unless assassinated by the rebel camp followers, would be released by the Union army. It was a time of terrible uncertainty to all the dwellers within Richmond's fated lines.

Now that her husband's health was in a great measure restored, Lucile's maternal affection clamored for her babe. The mother love was bounding in her heart, though she knew little Penn would be as kindly cared for by Ada as though she herself were with

him—still her mother heart longed for him, to see him, and to hear him speak those most endearing words to fond parents, “papa” and “mamma,” and to see his little hands stretched out to her in greeting once more. She felt if he were once again restored to her she could never bear to lose sight of him even for a day, and the thought of the weeks and months that would possibly intervene brought the tears to her eyes.

She recalled his infantile beauty, and thought how proud his father would be to hold him in his strong arms—this child of their love whom he had scarcely known—and in whom such fond hopes were centered.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A CONSPIRACY

One evening as they were about to retire a low rap was heard at the door, and immediately after General Fitzpatrick walked in, closing the door with care.

He looked disturbed and anxious, and it was evident that there was coming trouble in the air. And so, declining to be seated, he came at once to the ugly business which had brought him there at night to alarm them.

As cautiously as possible, he told them that he feared there was a conspiracy on foot to force Colonel Ledew to take up arms for the Confederacy, and so, fearing for his life should he

refuse, he had formed a plan to elude any cowardly attack that might be suddenly made; and subsequently, in a disguise which he would furnish, he would try to get him out across the lines, where he would be safe again under the starry flag he served. His wife would be safe, even in Richmond, under the protection of the general, until arrangements could be safely made for her to join her husband at Washington.

At first Ledew refused utterly to listen to anything that would separate him again from his wife. His heart was wrung with anguish at the thought, but when Lucile joined her own entreaties with General Fitzpatrick's he listened to the carefully-laid plan, which was this:

In a secret closet in the house, which had been built expressly for sudden

emergencies, and was unknown to any one except the general himself, was a cot bed, and a chair, a box of army crackers, a few bottles of wine, and a store of fresh water.

There was also a small aperture to let in light and air. It seemed to be a Gibraltar of safety for them in the emergency.

"Now," said the general, "you must be on the alert, and at the first sign of any demonstration you have only to touch the secret spring, which I will show you, and you can retreat to safe hiding. Be ready at any moment. You can leave the rest to me."

"But I cannot leave my wife to face these brutal ruffians alone," said Ledew, his heart failing him at the thought of danger to his idolized wife.

General Fitzpatrick's ardent assurance that no harm should come to her

pacified him, and the kindly rebel officer then went on to say: "Not finding you, they will naturally take it for granted that you have secretly escaped, and the rest will be comparatively easy. Trust all to me. I will see that no harm comes to Lucile—I swear it!"

Not until the good general had taken his departure did they realize that they were about to be separated again; the shadow of coming parting closed down upon them, and no sleep visited them that night.

The next day Lucile spent in putting the secret room in order for an immediate occupancy. Every sound appalled them, though there was nothing to denote the expected attack.

A week went by, during which time they kept up a constant watch, one relieving the other. The hours crawled slowly along under the strain

of the haunting fears now oppressing them.

One morning about daybreak a commotion was heard outside, at the same time a loud knocking at the door. They were ready for their ordeal, and thankful to the general for the means of resistance. They knew the dreaded hour had arrived, and tenderly embracing each other lingered reluctantly, when Ledew, realizing the position of his wife, said: "I cannot do it—I will not leave you to the mercies of these villains!"

He was ready to sacrifice his life in her defense, but Lucile tremblingly implored him, for their child's sake; and the marauders were now clamoring so loudly that she feared they would force the door.

There was not a moment to lose! And she, herself, touching the secret

spring, pushed her husband inside, and then appearing at the window, calmly inquired the meaning of the intrusion. A new courage had been given her to fight for the life dearer than her own.

Ruffians as they were, they respected the woman whose heroism in the prison had been so nobly demonstrated, and which they all knew of and secretly admired.

And the leader, raising his cap, assured her that no harm was intended to her, but that they had the most important business with her husband.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SECRET CLOSET.

"You will not find him here," she said, "but you have permission to search the house;" and herself unbolting all the doors, a thorough search was made of the whole apartment. They found nothing.

Then detailing a selected number to guard the house, they departed in hot haste, thinking to find him outside, while a guard was set to watch her every movement.

This was kept up for a few days, during which time Lucile occasionally found opportunity to cheer her husband in person, for the sentinels only made a formal search once a day, and

in the interval she kept his spirits up by sitting in an adjoining room and singing some of his favorite airs. And he knew that all was well while her beloved voice thrilled him. Her voice, as we have before said, was one of her great charms, and Ledew had never wearied of listening to its tones in their happy days. It was of that sympathetic quality which thrills and melts the heart to tenderness or rings out in peals of gladness so infectious that the listeners are imbued with the very sentiment of the song. And so her spirit mingled with his in the waves of melody.

With only a thin partition between them he could hear distinctly every tone of her voice, and he felt he could almost be happy in a dungeon with her to cheer him. He knew that General Fitzpatrick was busy perfecting

arrangements to run him out at night.

And now that his freedom was nearly assured, what plans he made for her happiness, and how he longed for the old, peaceful, happy life at their own Graylock! He felt renewed life and courage tingling in his veins while he listened to the magic of her voice. What would he not do or dare for her?

And he thought how happy little Penn would be when cradled on her gentle breast, while she would sing a lullaby to soothe him to sleep in the dear days to come. He hardly dared to think how happy they would all be when they were again reunited in their far-off paradise.

General Fitzpatrick had given strict orders that the lady, who was in a sense his protégée, should not be molested. And as no signs of the

missing man were in evidence the vigilance of the searchers relaxed.

And at the end of a week all espionage had been practically withdrawn and the general's plans were fully matured for Ledew's escape; the momentous hour was approaching for the attempt to leave Richmond.

In the garb of a crippled old Jew peddler the disguise of the colonel was perfect, and secret friends were secured to help him on his way.

Wearing a black curly wig and long flowing whiskers and mustache, with a patch over one eye, a begrimed and generally dirty appearance, and a pack on his back, no one would for a moment think of challenging the footman's right to follow his business as a Jew trader between the North and the South. Besides, he was equipped with the necessary route pass-papers, in

case of his being challenged. And having a repertoire of comical Jew stories at his command, the colonel could mimic their dialect and gestures to perfection. It seemed that he was armed at all points for the trial.

Lucile laughed until the tears ran down her face at his preliminary performances, and when he tried to kiss her she screamed and ran away; for her husband was a handsome colonel and not an uncouth Semitic peddler of notions. There is a certain romance of externals in even the most devoted of lovers to be observed.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ESCAPE.

The most practicable scheme was for Colonel Ledew to make his way north, passing the extended line of the Southern army on foot, while Lucile, who was all ready to start, at the same time, would take the boat from Richmond down the James, and after reaching Union soil at Fortress Monroe go to Washington, and then directly to Ada's house, where her husband would join her at the earliest possible moment.

In parting with General Fitzpatrick no words could express their gratitude. They had been in his hands for weeks, and they felt that they owed

him a debt which could never be repaid, and when they told him so he simply said: "Had the case been reversed, you would have done the same for 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

The lingering farewells were at last over, and again their life paths diverged, and again it was the woman who was morally courageous. For the colonel was shadowed with gloomy fears, brave soldier as he was.

Realizing the perilous nature of the part he was undertaking, he was overcome at parting with his wife, for he dreaded to leave her. Were she on Union soil he would fearlessly take the chances himself.

But Lucile had on her armor of faith, which she now kept always bright, and silently realizing the great All-Father's protecting care, she bade him be brave and trust, "nothing

wavering," in "the love that never faileth."

The journey was uneventful with Lucile, and she arrived in safety at her destination in Washington, due to the official pass furnished by General Fitzpatrick; and walking from the station just as the lamps were being lighted, hurrying to Ada's house, she could not resist the temptation to look in the window before knocking at the door, dreading lest something had befallen her darling boy. She could not wait another moment to satisfy her longing eyes, hoping to catch a glimpse of him through the window. Ada, who was dressed in deep mourning, was sitting on the floor playing with little Penn, who shouted with merri-ment as he toddled off after a ball which she threw up for him to catch.

He was the picture of happy baby

life and vigor—a regular little cupid. Lucile's first impulse was to rush forward and clasp her darling in her arms, but realizing that her unexpected appearance might be a serious shock to the loving guardian, she knocked, and then, unable to restrain herself, rushed in without waiting, very unceremoniously breaking up that ball game.

Ada, overcome with surprise, could scarcely speak, while Lucile rushed forward, and convulsively gathering little Penn to her breast, showered her kisses on his face.

Baby, evidently not accustomed to "familiarity with strangers," however, screamed and kicked most vigorously, and breaking away, ran to the foster sister, now promoted to be the foster-mother of her dearest friend's babe. It was a picture for an artist, to see the three all locked in one embrace, the

embodiment of a happy surprise party.

Ada, who had donned mourning for the baby's soldier father, was overjoyed when she heard the unexpected good news that he was not only very much alive, but would probably soon be with them should fortune favor him in passing unscathed the keen-eyed rebel pickets, and the marauders of the open space between the grim battle lines of the two armies.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE RETURN.

A week had elapsed. Lucile had at last succeeded in establishing amicable maternal relations with little Penn, and now rested and refreshed, she was momentarily expecting news of her husband. Her heart trembled at every knock. How long those days seemed!

One night after they had all retired there was a sound of carriage wheels which stopped at their door. Lucile sprang out of bed, and quickly raising her window inquired what was wanted. The man answered: "I have a telegram, madam, for Mrs. Ledew!" Then Lucile's heart ticked off moments which seemed like an eternity of anxious suspense.

Hastily throwing on a wrapper she ran down the stairs. Ada making her appearance at the same time, the trembling Lucile handed her the telegram, begging her to open it. She dared not break the seal herself. The fate of two lives and the happiness of a home were in the balance.

Ada, thus appealed to, tore open the message and read, "Safe and all right. Will be with you at the earliest possible moment."

There was no indication of the soldier's whereabouts, but he was under the stars and stripes again, and safe.

Then the two women, who would probably have borne the burden of sorrow heroically for each other's sake if the plan had failed, now broke down, and throwing their arms around each other indulged in a good cry. Such tears are a safety valve and clear the

atmosphere. They were all the happier for them.

Glorious old Fitzpatrick had saved them! All honor to the brave old Reb! The tension of the last few days had been so great that when the pressure was suddenly removed the loving women were naturally overcome.

Anticipating the now happy certainty of the wanderer's return, next morning they were up bright and early, ready to welcome him whenever he should arrive; but it was not until towards the close of the day,—the day that seemed to them interminable,—when they were all sitting on the veranda, that a carriage drove up and Colonel Ledew, looking handsome, and now dressed in the uniform of his rank, stepped out, affectionately embracing his wife and foster-sister.

No words could voice his surging emotions; but happy tears were in his eyes, and choked his utterance.

Little Penn had scampered off and was nowhere to be found. The star actor was absent from the tableau, and after hallooing for him all over the house, on going out into the little garden the little truant was found hiding behind a currant bush, and resisting capture. His happy parents were called to come and look at the cunning little rogue, who, having become rebellious at the excitement, had fled to the garden and now stood at bay.

In a low-necked sleeveless robe of dainty white, tied at the shoulders with knots of blue ribbon, little socks and low-cut shoes, with his beautiful shapely head thrown back and his glorious eyes flashing defiance, all the posing in the world could not have

presented him in an attitude so altogether charming. And when his admiring father caught him up and attempted to kiss him, the defiant heir of Graylock fought like a little Turk, and said, "Do way, man."

It was the old story, the happy tyranny of unconscious childhood, and the indulgent submission of fond parents.

In this quiet rural retreat the soldier now gave himself up to the enjoyment of his well-earned holiday and the companionship of his charming wife, his idolized son and heir, and his loving foster-sister.

These were, indeed, golden days of cloudless skies, peaceful and restful, and all too soon they passed away.

The government still required his services. Promotion, duty and the tented field beckoned him onward.

His furlough was ended, and plans must now be considered for the future welfare of his family. The duration of the war was as uncertain as at any previous period of its history. The field was not yet won, and the Union flags dropped feebly in their onward southern march.

Lucile had left her home hurriedly, and everything was in the hands of servants. There were all the affairs of a vast estate awaiting her and requiring her personal supervision. She knew her presence was sorely needed there, and that, soon again engaged in active service as he probably would be, she would see but little of her husband should she remain at Washington.

And so, after canvassing the whole situation, it seemed best for her to return to Graylock, hoping and trusting that events would so shape them-

selves that her husband could soon be able to join her—that the grim game of war would soon be over. Their duties called them in opposite directions, and they resolved, each for the other's sake, to accept the situation; and so, bidding an affectionate farewell to Ada, Lucile, with her child and maid, bravely started for her Western home, and Colonel Ledew departed to join his regiment.

Stern duty was now urging him on, and he prepared to follow its unwelcome mandates.

Ada was heart-broken at parting with little Penn, whom she now loved as tenderly as her own baby girl. And promising to pay a visit to the Ledews another year, at Graylock, she parted with her now doubly-endearred foster brother and sister, and the lovely heir of Graylock Manor.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HOME AGAIN.

The ensuing winter was an exceedingly trying one for Colonel Ledew, who had passed the fall campaign in command of a brigade. His terrible illness in Libby prison had secretly undermined his health, and the heavy strain of the daily life in camp and on the march unmistakably told upon him. Fell disease brings down more soldiers than the bullet!

He had now a constant hacking cough, attended with great debility, and at last the reluctant army surgeon peremptorily ordered a suspension of his duties for an indefinite period. He had been faithful, even unto death.

As many months would elapse, probably a much longer period, before he could resume his work, he was compelled to resign. His star brigade imperatively needed a leader able to wield the sword.

For fear of unnecessarily distressing his faithful wife he had tenderly withheld the knowledge of his illness until she could not be kept in ignorance of his condition any longer. And so the return to Graylock Manor was commenced.

The journey was a long and very tedious one for the sick man, but he was buoyed up with the fond anticipation of returning to his home and to his dear ones.

Meeting him at the depot on his arrival, the astonished Lucile was greatly shocked, as she was wholly unprepared for the sad change that

had taken place in him; the warning letter having only mildly stated his real condition of health.

Friends and neighbors had assembled to welcome him. Proud indeed were they to do honor to their laureled soldier, the tried and true, battle-worn and battle-scarred hero of their loyal admiration and love.

But instead of the joyful demonstration they had intended to make they simply raised their hats in a sad silence as he appeared on the platform of the car, supported by his servants and with the seeming pallor of death on his face; while Lucile, scarcely less pale, affectionately embraced him.

Some of the more prominent citizens now came forward and cordially pressed his hand, speaking as cheerfully as they could. But there was a sad prophecy on his marble face.

It was a raw, cold day in early spring, but cheerless as was the prospect without, the sick man's pulses bounded with satisfaction that he was home at last.

And later, comfortably reclining in his easy chair in front of a bright blazing fire, with his loved ones around him, he forgot that he was so ill, that he had been so lonely all those weary months, so discouraged as night after night he lay awake, unable to sleep for the ceaseless cough that had racked his frame, weakened with the exhaustion of field and fray.

Lucile could not disguise the gravity of the case, though she would not admit it even to herself, trusting on, trusting ever.

Assuming a cheerful exterior, she performed her duties so lovingly and tenderly that the dear life, now almost

spent, was all unconsciously drifting, slowly drifting, every day a little farther away from her and the scenes so dear to him, and which would soon know him no more.

She was ever at his side, anticipating even his slightest wishes, and delicately helping him to realize the precious love of the Christ—the Life that is eternal, and the Truth that was so wonderfully sustaining and comforting to herself in this darkest hour of trial.

It was evident now to her that the last “signal taps,” “all lights out,” would soon be sounded for him.

The gentle veiling of the ebbing tide of the strong man’s life, with the loving mist of tenderness, which hid the farther shores, now nearer, nearer every day, was the sad but loving task of those around him.

CHAPTER XXXII.

AT REST.

It was twilight, and the fragrance of the June roses was in all the balmy air. Graylock Manor had donned its imperial mantle of early summer loveliness. The sick man had asked that he be wheeled out on the veranda, that he might watch the splendor of the closing day.

What so perfect as a day in June? It was in this royal month of roses, too, when Ledew and Lucile had first become acquainted,—that never-to-be-forgotten day when he had saved her life.

His loving wife now sat by his side, and Penn would have his little chair,

too, close to papa, while Kriss crouched at the child's feet wistfully, as though he too realized the solemnity of the hour.

The daylight faded out, and gradually the stars began to twinkle in the blue above. All were silent and all were sad.

Suddenly a night bird burst into song, a gentle zephyr sighed softly in the bending tree tops; the hand which Lucile held became nerveless, a slight shiver passed over the sick man and all was over. The veteran was mustered out and sought the eternal camp-fires beyond the skies.

The dreaded messenger had found them lovers still, hand clasped in hand. Without a struggle or a sigh, a look of ineffable peace and love unutterable on his face, the husband and father had passed on to that land where the roses

shall never fade, and the sun will never set.

The people, desirous of showing all those marks of respect which Colonel Ledew's distinguished services in the field had so grandly entitled him to, requested the privilege of burying him with all military honors. He was to them the type of soldier loyal unto death. But Lucile said, "Nay, my friends; living, he served you as jurist and warrior; dead, he is mine alone. I thank you for all your kind intentions, but it cannot be."

Respecting her wishes, they simply brought their tribute of laurel leaf and spotless flowers, and laid them on his coffin. The flag he served, the sword he wielded, lay over his pulseless breast.

They honored the soldier, but they loved the man, and his widow and

orphan would ever be a sacred charge for whose welfare each felt personally responsible.

He had given to them on the bench the splendid years of his mental ripeness, and baring his breast to the enemy in defense of law and order, had died as he had lived, brave, true, steadfast and loyal,—a man of men.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

AU REVOIR, BUT NOT GOOD-BYE.

In one of their rambles in the dear old days of their first happy year at Graylock Manor, with her husband's arm affectionately encircling her waist, they came upon a retired and beautiful spot where the branches of the trees interlocked, and the sunbeams glinted through the green leaves, whose fleeting shadows chased each other in and out on the smooth turf, playing hide-and-seek as the forest branches were swayed by the gentle breeze.

And though the spot lay within their own private grounds, the brooding silence was as deep and unbroken as of a primeval forest.

Not a sound was audible save the soft, distant notes of an oriole, singing high up on the tree-tops far above them there.

The perfect, dreamy quiet of the spot seemed all too sacred for words. And there in that happy hour, seating themselves on a mossy knoll, with her head on her husband's shoulder, she had woven her fancies into a bright fabric of anticipations of the future,—a loving woman's vision.

What stores of bright promise the future held! Life had flung its golden gates wide open to them; and they were already within its most charmed circle!—its Holy of Holies! What pictures her fancy had fondly painted; and what dreams she had dreamed! This was an unforgotten consecration of the happy past.

Now, all had vanished; and was not

this a fitting place to lay him where their dead hopes already lie buried?

Here it was they laid his mortal remains. Here the soldier calmly sleeps, far from battle's rude alarms, under the ward of one dear sentinel of love; and often at the close of day Lucile sits by his grave and recalls all her past happiness; but there are no tears, for she knows that he has never so truly lived and loved as now, and she knows that the tender words so long ago spoken and so fondly cherished, when he had said to her, "Mine you are, and mine you shall be, both here and in the great Hereafter," will be realized in that cloudless day which shall never end. For there shall be "no night there; neither sorrow, nor the shadow of parting."

By a singular coincidence Ada had lost her husband about the epoch of

the lamented Colonel Ledew's death, and Lucile had claimed the due fulfillment of Ada's promise to pay her a visit; to which appeal Ada consented, and the visitor was now momentarily expected at Graylock.

Their meeting was a sad one, but after the first outburst of their still poignant grief, they found comfort in each other's companionship, their loyal natures doubling the resistant powers of unforgotten love.

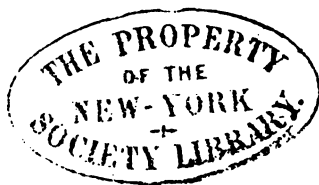
Ada was charmed with the beauties of Graylock Manor, and subsequently yielded to Lucile's solicitation to make her future home with her. Their inner sentiments were entirely congenial, and their life work was to follow the commands of the Master, not figuratively but literally.

They believed Heaven to be a state of consciousness, not a far-away local-

ity, and that every kind word, every good deed, and every loving thought, are passports to its divine harmonies; that nothing is lost in the eternity of God,—each true note sounding on forever.

The two little ones, Tiny and Penn, were soon vastly delighted with each other's society, and their fond mothers sometimes indulged in an innocent day-dream that sometime in the golden future they will take their places as Hero and Heroine of Graylock Manor; that the currents of their lives may join and flow on together, till they mingle with the Higher Life which flows on forever in eternal harmony.

THE END.





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